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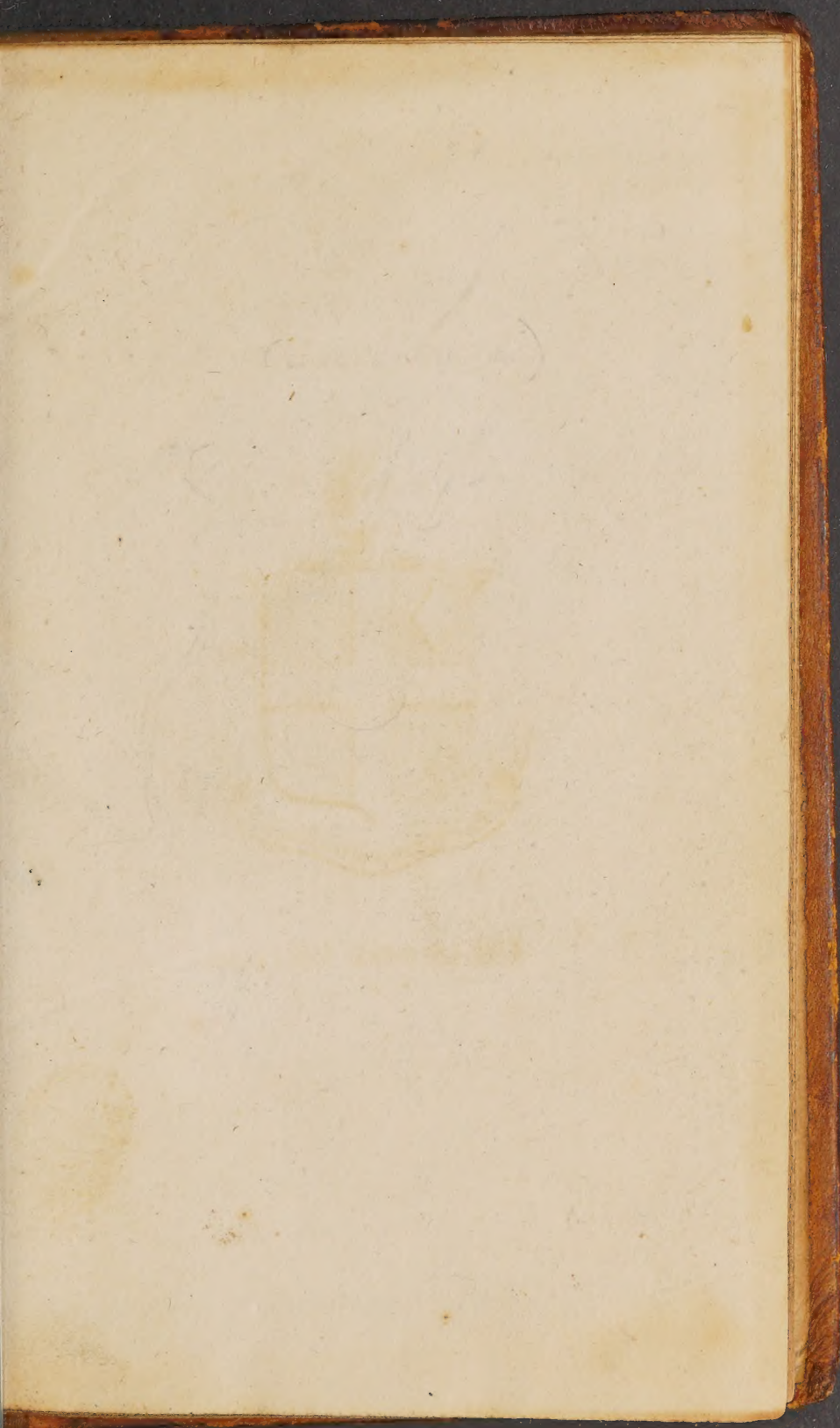


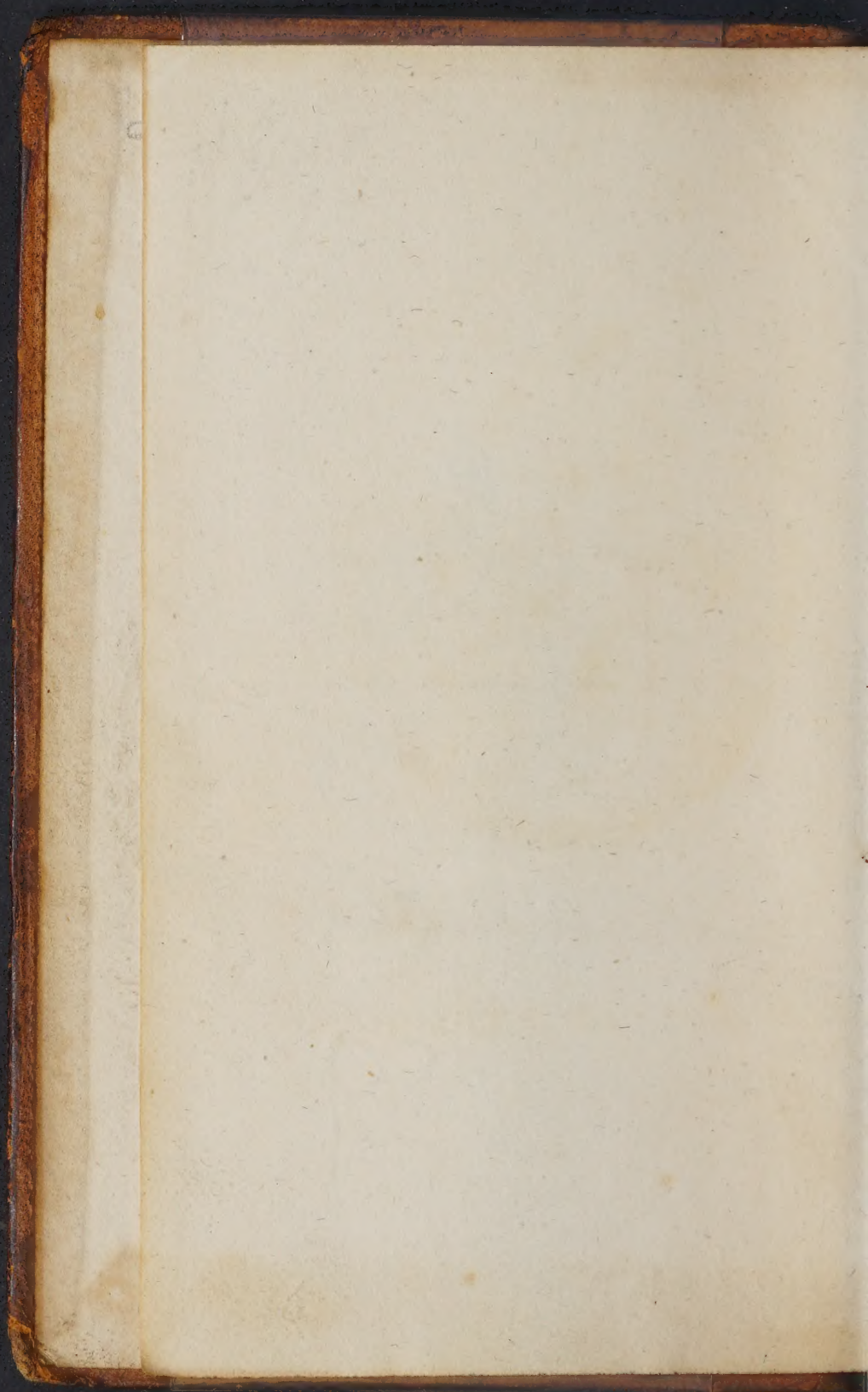


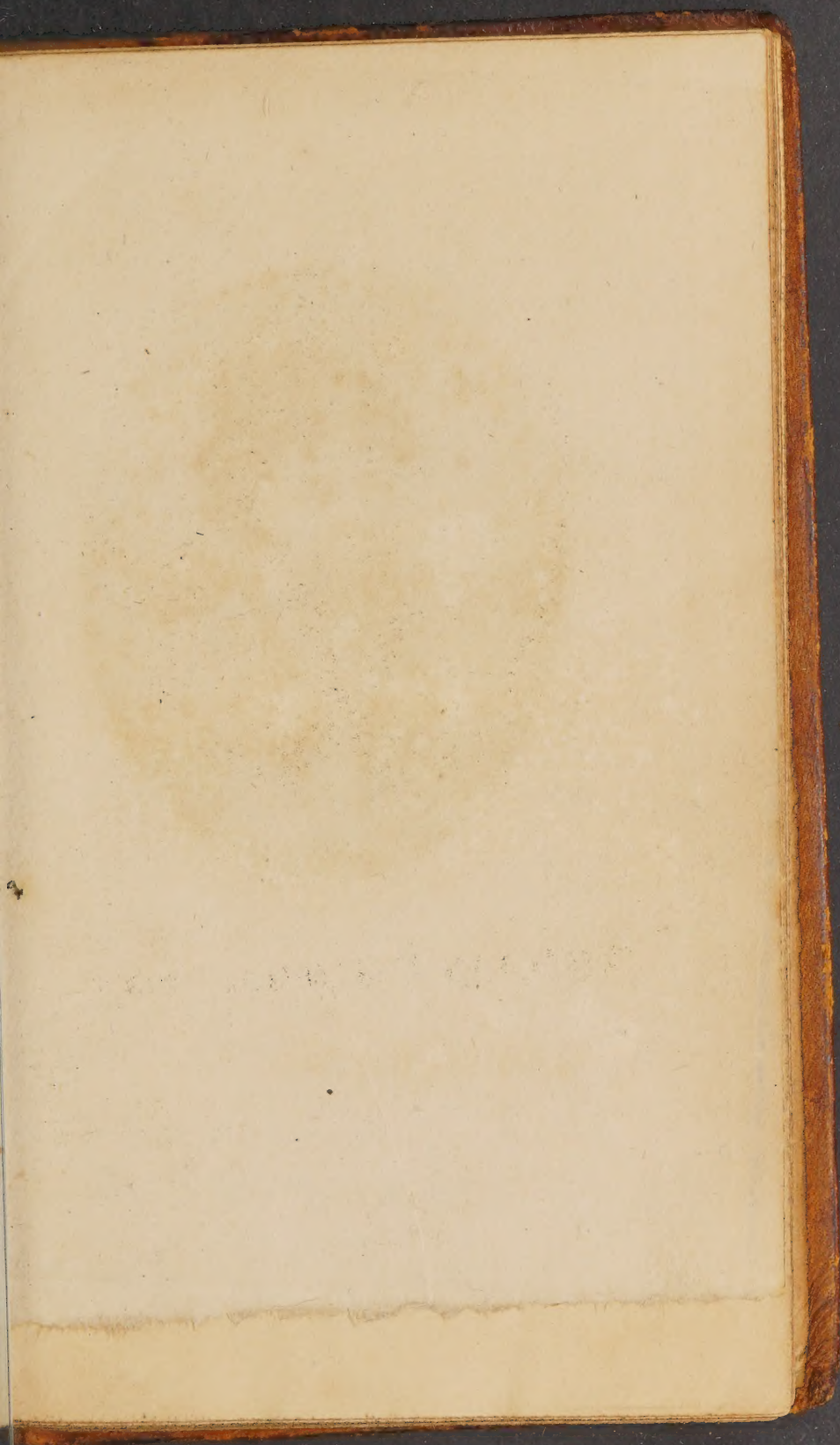
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CHANDOS LEIGH.









THOMAS CHATTERTON

Engraved as the Act directs Feb^r. 1797. by H.D. Symonds N^o. 20. Pater-noster A.

THE
L I F E
O F
THOMAS CHATTERTON.

By JOHN DAVIS,
AUTHOR OF "TRAVELS IN AMERICA."

The time of my departure is approaching.
Nigh is the hurricane that will scatter my leaves.
To-morrow, perhaps, the wanderer will appear—
His eye will search for me round every spot,
And will,—and will not find me.

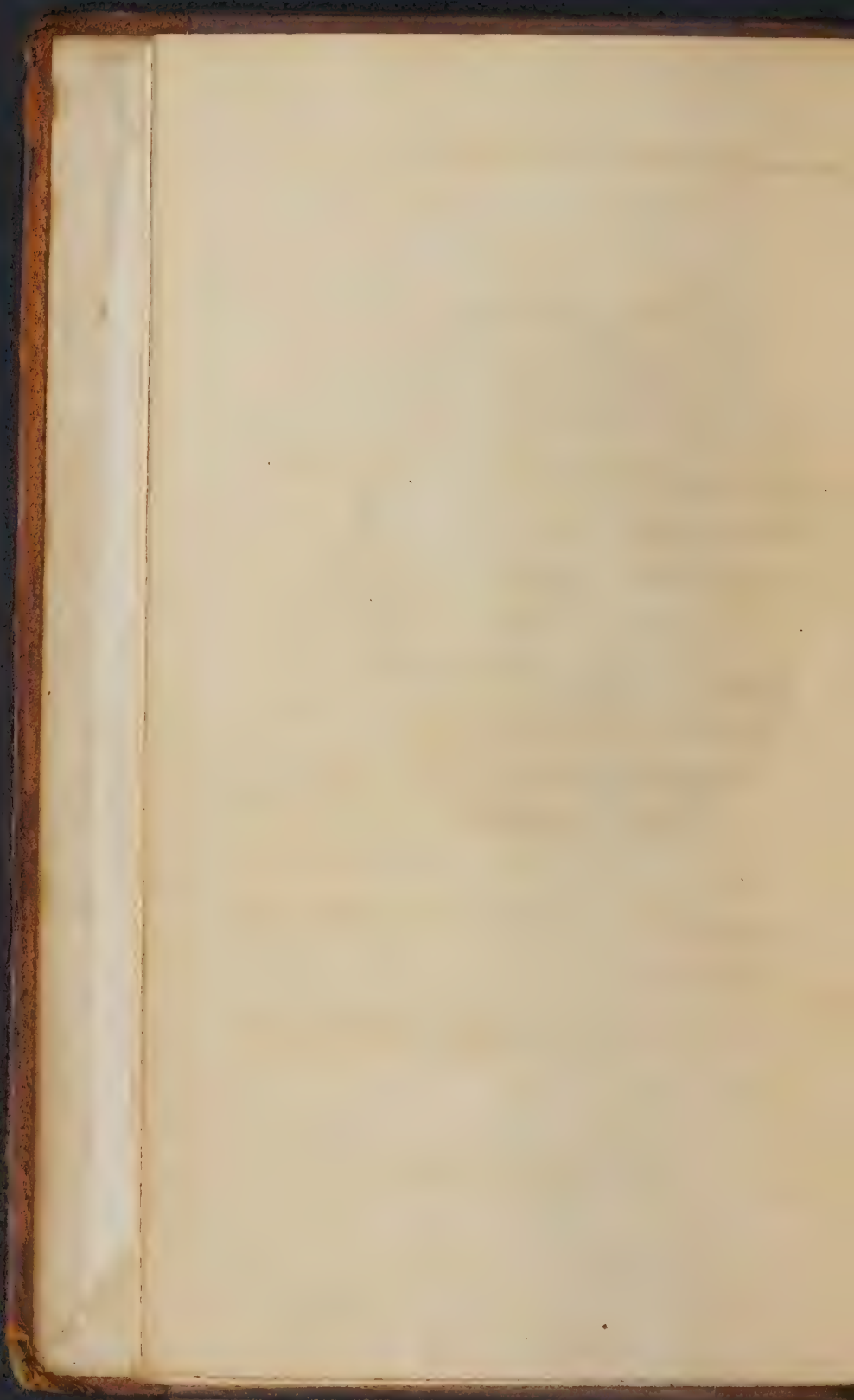
Ossian.

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BY G. HAZARD, 49, BEECH-STREET.





Advertisement.

DR. GREGORY'S Life of Chatterton being now only known as it is appended to the Collection of the Works, of Chatterton in three large volumes; a new Life of the boy-bard is indisputably wanted. The task I have undertaken with no small diligence; and endeavoured to make my biography agreeable, entertaining and instructive.

THE AUTHOR.

JUST PUBLISHED.

- I.—The Post-Captain; or, the Wooden Walls well Manned; comprehending a View of Naval Society and Manners. By Dr. Moore. Price 7s. in boards.
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THE
L I F E
OF
THOMAS CHATTERTON.

IT has been found that the powers of genius, however they may levy a tribute on future times, promote but little the actual fortune of the possessor. Whether it be that men are unwilling to acknowledge superiority in contemporary merit, and withhold their applause till death softens enmity, and allays competition; or that the breast glowing with the consciousness of high intellectual excellence, cannot descend to that humility by which

souls of grosser mould secure to themselves the opulence of large possessions.

The narrative I am about to relate of Thomas Chatterton, will exemplify my position. Of premature talents and attainments, of boundless invention, and invincible industry; he has been considered a dazzling miracle in the history of literature. He was a magician; and the potency of his poetical spells has confounded the reasonings even of veteran incredulity.

With the wild wit of Shakespear, the sublime conceptions of Milton, and the long, resounding march of Dryden, this boy-bard rushed naked into the amphitheatre of life, and sustained a brilliant part, though his spectators were contemptuous and cold.

THOMAS CHATTERTON, the posthumous son of a man in humble life, was born at Bristol, November 20, 1752. His father was master of the charity-school in pyle-street, one of the singers at the Cathedral, and sexton of

Redcliff church. He died in August, 1752, leaving his wife pregnant of a son who was born on the 20th of November, and baptized the 1st of January following, by the name of Thomas, at St. Mary Redcliff, by the Rev. Mr. Gibbs, vicar of that church.

We are informed by the sister of Chatterton, Mrs. Newton, that before he was five years old, he discovered an ambition to preside over his playmates; but that he was slow in attaining the first rudiments of learning.

His father had been succeeded in the school at pyle-street, by Mr. Love, to whose care Chatterton was committed when he reached his fifth year. But this alphabetical teacher, unable to estimate real genius, remanded him to his mother as a dull child, incapable of improvement.

Mrs. Chatterton was rendered unhappy by the sluggish understanding of her son. But at length her uneasiness was relieved by a singular circumstance. His eye was caught by the ornamented capitals of an old folio music book that

lay in the room. He delighted to gaze on these letters; and, the mother watching the concurrence of opportunity, took advantage of this passion to initiate him in the alphabet.

This circumstance, together with his being taught to read out of a black-letter bible, will be thought by the partizans of the theory of association, to have had great influence in the peculiar turn to the imitation of antiquities which he afterwards displayed.

Chatterton at this infant age, was singularly grateful for the instruction he received from his mother and sister. He was not only liberal of his thanks, but promised them a deal of finery when he grew up as a reward of their care.

At the age of eight years he obtained admission into Colston's blue-coat charity school; a seminary situated at St. Augustine's Back in Bristol, and upon the plan of Christ's Hospital.

At the charity school the usher, Mr. Philips, was *smit with the love of sacred song*, and sometimes relaxed the

duties of the mechanical penman by writing poetry for the magazines. A spirit of emulation was kindled in the school. The example of Mr. Philips tempted many of the senior students to strew the thorny paths of arithmetic with flowers, and try their hands at a verse.

Our charity-boy Chatterton was now almost twelve. He shared in the general enthusiasm, but it was in privacy. A satire was his first poetical production. It was directed against a man who had turned Methodist from mercenary motives, and preached the gospel merely to put money into his purse.* It was produced when he was only eleven years and five months old, and displays a degree of humour and ease of versification not to be found in the literary puerilities of Cowley or Pope.

* Such an one it was very easy to find in Bristol.

APOSTATE WILL.

IN days of old, when Wesley's pow'r
Gather'd new strength by ever hour;
Apostate Will just sunk in trade,
Resolv'd his bargain should be made;
Then strait to Wesley he repairs,
And puts on grave and solemn airs;
Then thus the pious man address'd,
Good sir, I think your doctrine best;
Your servant will a Wesley be,
Therefore the principles teach me.
The preacher then instruction gave,
How he in this world should behave:
He hears, assents, and gives a nod,
Says every word's the word of God.
Then lifting his dissembling eyes,
How blessed is the sect he cries,
Nor Bingham, Young, nor Stillingfleet
Shall make me from this sect retreat.

He then his circumstance declar'd,
How hardly with him matters far'd;
Begg'd him next meeting for to make
A small collection for his sake.
The preacher said, Do not repine,
The whole collection shall be thine.

With looks demure and cringing bows,
About his business strait he goes;
His outward acts were grave and prim,
The Methodist appear'd in him.
But, be his outward what it will,
His heart was an Apostate's still
He'd oft profess an hallow'd flame,
And every where preach'd Wesley's name;
He was a preacher and what not,
As long as money could be got;
He'd oft profess with holy fire,
The labourer's worthy of his hire.

It happened once upon a time,
When all his works were in their prime,
A noble place appear'd in view,
Then—to the Methodists adieu;
A Methodist no more he'll be,
The Protestants serve best for *he*.
Then to the curate strait he ran,
And thus address'd the rev'rend man;

I was a Methodist, 'tis true,
With penitence I turn to you;
O that it were your bounteous will
That I the vacant place might fill!
With justice I'd myself acquit,
Do every thing that's right and fit.

The curate straightways gave consent—
To take the place he quickly went.
Accordingly he took the place,
And keeps it with dissembled grace.

The master of the Colston charity school, Mr. Haynes, said that Chatterton was not a boy of extraordinary parts, nor did he make any display of abilities during the time he was at school, which was till he was fourteen years and a half old.

This is very properly answered by Mr. Warton, for the same reason, says Mr. Warton, that Mr. Haynes thought Chatterton a blockhead, I think he was an ingenious boy. The teacher of arithmetic could not discern the future

poet. Mr. Haynes's opinion reminds us of the dancing-master, who, when Lord Oxford was appointed first minister to Queen Anne, declared he wondered what her Majesty could see in Lord Oxford, for that when he had the honour of teaching his Lordship to dance, he was the greatest dunce at a minuet that he ever remembered.

What was supposed to be dullness in Chatterton was genius. The symptoms of talents were misconstrued by his contemporaries. They were disgusted with his pride which was a consciousness of pre-eminence of abilities.

Mr. Capel an intimate acquaintance of Chatterton, relates that there was generally a dreariness in his look, and and a wildness attended with a visible contempt for others.

The silence, the solitude of Chatterton, his eccentric habits and singularities of behaviour, were not attributed to the right cause. His fits of melancholy were mistaken for sullenness. His Sister says, that he was "sometimes so gloomy, that for many days

“together, he would say very little,
“and that by constraint.”

He despised discretion, a virtue allied to many meannesses, and in the place of worldly prudence, attention to proposals of economy, and ideas of a regular profession, he substituted his anticipation of immortality.

Mr. Thistlethwaite, one of his young friends who used to visit him at school, informs us, that when the senior boys were attempting to rival their master Philips, in a sort of poetical contest, Chatterton remained an idle spectator; and from his inattention on this occasion, infers his want both of inclination and abilities for literary pursuits.

But this apparent indifference was owing to the coyness or delicacy of genius, not always willing to discover itself; and avoiding the observation of others not so much from fear as from contempt. Silent and unsuspected he was now soliciting the Muse in secret. He had already hired books, says his sister, from a circulating library; and at the hours allotted to play, he

constantly retired to read. This was the young Edwin who invoked for Rowley the God of Song.

A taste for reading had now disclosed itself in Chatterton. It became a kind of ruling passion. With the trifle his worthy mother allowed him for pocket money, he hired books as he had an opportunity, and before he was twelve years old, he wrote a catalogue of the books he had read to the number of seventy. Of these the chief subjects were history and divinity.

By this early attention to english writers, our blue-coat charity-boy familiarized himself with his native idiom, at a period when the sons of noblemen and gentleman are unprofitably employed in scanning the flattering versifiers of the Augustan age. Hence the prematurity of his skill in the structure of verse and prose. And hence he was enabled to express himself with clearness and precision in his own language, at a time of life when it would have rebelled against the classical students of Eton and Westminster.

At twelve years old he was confirmed by the bishop. The ceremony had a deep impression on his mind. He made very sensible and serious remarks upon its awfulness, and on his own feelings and convictions during it.

He now began to discover that ardour and versatility of genius, by which he was afterwards so strongly characterized. He paraphrased the ninth chapter of Job, together with some chapters of Isaiah; and, wrote a satire on his upper master, Mr. Warner, whom he secretly despised for his want of literature and taste.

He had been gloomy from the time he was sent to the blue-coat school, but it was remarked by his mother and sister that he became cheerful after he began to write poetry.

On July 1, 1767, being fourteen years and a half old, he left Colston's charity-school, and was articled clerk to Mr. Lambert an attorney of Bristol, for seven years; a man transcendently qualified to be a scrivener, for he had not more learning than the Edinburgh

reviewers, nor more imagination than than a corrector of the press.

Mr. Lambert wholly occupied by his deeds and bonds, was insensible that he had taken into his family a stripling, who at ten years old was wiser than many of double his years.

It was in the house of Mr. Lambert that Chatterton cultivated those studies and produced those poems, which have secured to him immortality. His literary pursuits were various; but the study of old english authors predominated over every other, a study to which his mind was directed by a very curious circumstance.

In the church of St. Mary Redcliff, Bristol, which was founded or rebuilt by W. Canynge, an eminent merchant of Bristol, in the reign of Edward IV (the 15 century) there is a kind of muniment room, over the north porch, in which were deposited six or seven chests, one of which was called Mr. Canynge's coffer, This chest had been formerly secured by six keys, entrusted to different persons but in process of

time the keys were lost; and when, about 1727, in consequence of a notion that the chest contained some title deeds, an order was made by the vestry for its examination, the locks were forced, The deeds found in it were taken away, but a number of other manuscripts were left exposed to casual depredation. Many were carried off; but the father of Chatterton was insatiable in his plunder. He removed baskets full of the parchment manuscripts to his school, but he made no better use of them than to cover the boys' books.

At the death of Chatterton's father, the widow being under a necessity of removing, carried the remainder of the parchments to her new habitation; and, as the occasion required, the worthy woman made thread-papers of them for herself and her daughter.

When Chatterton was first articulated to Mr. Lambert, he used frequently to come home to his mother, by way of a short visit. There, one day, his eye was caught by one of these parchments,

which had been converted into a thread-paper. That moment was the hinge of his future destiny. That circumstance determined his future projects. He had already dabbled in heraldry, and made collections of old english words from different glossaries. But his passion was now confirmed. He examined the characters of the parchments, and formed the design of converting the circumstance into a regular system of literary deception.

He began to interrogate his mother respecting the parchments of which she had made thread-papers; asking how she got them, and whence they came.

She related to him the history of the chest in Redcliff-church, and produced what other parchments had escaped the general wreck. But they were very few; there was not enough to make half a dozen more thread-papers.

Chatterton, however, affected rapture on obtaining them, and having examined their contents, declared "he

“had found a treasure, and was so glad
“that nothing could be like it.”

The passion which Chatterton had before felt for old english customs and manners, became enthusiastic. He made every study subservient to the project he contemplated, of counterfeiting ancient english. He obtained Speight's Chaucer, and from its glossary compiled one for his own use, in two parts. The first contained old words with their modern english; the second the modern english with its old words. The second part was his grand instrument in preparing his ancient poetry. It enabled him to turn modern english into old, as an *english and latin dictionary* enables the student to translate english into latin.

It was from Mr. Green, bookseller of Bristol, that he obtained Speight's Chaucer. From other acquaintance he procured Skinner, Kersey, and the small saxon dictionary. Possessing a mind well seasoned with english poetry, and liberally endowed with that power which constitutes a poet,

that intellectual energy which collects, combines, amplifies and animates; these books enabled him to carry into execution his darling scheme of producing works that should astonish the learned; and such were his ingenuity and perseverance that the historical collections of Fœsulanus which Curzio pretended to have found when digging with his spade, incur contempt only when compared to the poems Chatterton discovered to have lain so long in the iron chest of Redcliff church.

Chatterton had been somewhat more than a twelvemonth with Mr. Lambert, and was nearly sixteen, when his ingenuity excited the notice of the inhabitants of Bristol.

Upon the opening of the new bridge in the beginning of October 1768, a paper appeared in Farley's Bristol Journal, entitled, "A Description of the Fryars first passing over the Old Bridge, taken from an ancient Manuscript."

The paper is singularly curious. It exhibits strong powers of invention, a

considerable acquaintance with ancient customs, and no contemptible skill in the mimickry of ancient english.

Description of the Fryars

PASSING OVER THE OLD BRIDGE;

taken from an Ancient Manuscript.

“ ON Fridaie was the time fixed for
“ passing the new brydge. Aboute
“ the time of tollynge the tenth
“ clocke, Master Greggoire Dalbenye
“ mounted on a fergreyne horse, in-
“ formed Master Mair all thyngs were
“ prepared, when two Beadils went
“ first streying stre. Next came a
“ manne dressed up as follows, hose
“ of gootskyne crine part outwards,
“ doublette & waiscot, also over
“ which a white robe without sleeves,
“ much like an albe but not so long,
“ reachinge but to his hands. A gir-

“ dle of azure over his left shoulder,
“ rechede also to his hands on the
“ right & doubled back to his left,
“ bucklynge with a goulden buckle
“ dangled to his knee, thereby repre-
“ sentinge a Saxon earlderman.

“ In his hands he bare a shield, the
“ maistre of Gille a Brogton, who paint-
“ ed the same, representing Sainte
“ Warburgh crossing the foorde; then
“ a mickle strong man in armour, car-
“ ried a huge anlace, after whom came
“ six claryons & six minstrels, who
“ song the song of Sainte Warburgh.
“ Then came Master Maier mounted
“ on a white horse dight with sable
“ trappyngs wrought about by the
“ Nunnes of Saint Kenna, with gould
“ and Silver, his hayre braded with
“ ribbons & a chaperon with the aun-
“ tient armes of Bristowe fastened on
“ his forehead. Master Maier bare in
“ his hande a goulden rodde, & a
“ congean squire bare in his hande,
“ his helmet waulkinge by the syde
“ of the horse. Then came the earl-
“ derman & city broders, mounted

“ on sabyell horses dyght with white
“ trappyngs & plumes & scarlet caps
“ and chaperons having thereon sable
“ plumes; after them, the preests &
“ frears, parish mendicant & secular,
“ some syngynge Sainte Warburghs
“ songe, others soundynge clarions
“ thereto & others some citrialles.

“ In thilke manner reachynge the
“ brydge the manne with the anlace
“ stode on the first top of a mounde,
“ yreed in the midst of the brydge,
“ than went up the manne with the
“ sheelde, after him the minstrels &
“ clarions; and then the preests &
“ freeres all in white albes, making a
“ most goodly shewe, the maier &
“ earldermen standinge rounde, they
“ songe with the sound of claryons,
“ the song of Sainte Baldwyne, which
“ being done, the manne on the top
“ threw with great myght his anlace
“ into the sea & the claryons soun-
“ ded an auncient charge & forloyne.
“ Then theie song again the song of
“ Sainte Warburgh, & proceeded up
“ Xts Hill to the croses, where a Latin

“ sermon was preached by Ralf de
“ Blunderville & with sound of cla-
“ rion theye again want to the brydge
“ and there dined, spendynge the rest
“ of the daye in sports and plaies, the
“ freers of Sainte Augustyne doing
“ the play of the knights of Bristow
“ meekynge a great fire at night on
“ Kynslate Hill.”

So singular a memoir could not fail to excite the curiosity of the inhabitants of Bristol, and many were desirous to see the original. The printer, Mr. Farley, could give no account of it, or of the person who brought the copy; but after much inquiry it was discovered that the manuscript was brought by a youth between fifteen and sixteen years old, of the name of THOMAS CHATTERTON.

Chatterton was therefore interrogated about its origin. To the threats of those who treated him (agreeably to his appearance) as a boy, he returned nothing but haughtiness, and a refusal to give any account. By milder usage he was softened, and after great variation of account, asserted that they had been found by his father, together with a number of other manuscripts, in an iron chest that stood in the upper room over the chapel on the north side of Redcliff church.

At this period Chatterton had for more than a year been executing his darling project of composing such poetry as he thought would pass current for the poetry of the fifteenth century. He wrote his poems on parchment supplied him by the attorney's office, and to give his manuscripts a venerable air of antiquity, he smoke-dried them up the chimney, blackened them over the candle, crumpled them in his hand, jumped upon them on the ground, belaboured

them with a mallet and rubbed them over with yellow ochre.

Having perfected his achievements in this new field of literature, his next care was to make them known. This was not a matter of difficulty, for he had nothing more to do than talk of the marvellous treasure of poetry that had been found in the iron chest.

The intelligence was quickly rumoured through Bristol. It very little affected the majority of the inhabitants. Traders care very little for poetry whether it be ancient or modern. And there are a few people at Bristol who do not think the manuscripts of Rowley and the fragments of Abbot John, were turned to their proper use, when good Mrs. Chatterton converted them into thread papers for herself and her daughters.

Bristol, however, was not without some men of literary taste. Mr. Catcott, *a learned antiquary of the city*, hearing the report, formed an acquaintance with Chatterton, and obtained from him several of the ancient

poems; namely, the Bristow Tragedy, Canynge's Epitaph, the Song to Ælla, and some pieces of inferior note. These poems were the reputed productions of the fifteenth century. They were said to be written by Thomas Rowley, a monk who lived in the reign of Edward IV. that is, between 1460 and 1480. He was represented to be a secular priest of St. John's of Bristol, this bard of Bristol was not without a Mæcenas. He was patronized by that great and good man Sir William Canynge, an eminent citizen of Bristol, who founded an almshouse, and built the noble church of St. Mary Redcliff, the finest parish church in England. To Master Canynge Rowley dedicated his principal poems; Rowley, a poet never before heard of, and whose poems for upwards of three hundred years were shut up in an iron chest; that is, from the year 1465 till the year 1768 they were immured in a chest that stood in the muniment room, over the north porch of St. Redcliff church.

Of the first Rowley poetry that

Chatterton put into the hands of Mr. Catcott, I will insert a specimen. Every reader is not acquainted with the Rowley poems. I insert the Song to Ella, premising, for the elucidation of it, that Ella, to whom the song is addressed, was Lord of Bristol Castle, and defeated the Danes in a bloody battle at a place called Watchette.

SONGE TO ÆLLA,

LORDE OF THE CASTEL OF BRYSTOWE,

YNNE DAIES OF YORE.

OH thou, orr what remaynes of thee,
 Ælla, the darlynge of futurity,
 Lett thys mie songe bolde as thie courage be,
 As everlastynge to posteritie.

Whanne Dacya's sonnes, whose hayres of bloude
 redde hue
 Lyche kynge-cuppes brastyng wythe the morning
 due,
 Arraung'd ynne dreare arraie,
 Upponne the lethale daie,
 Spredde farre and wyde onne Watchets shore;
 Than dyddst thou furieuse stande,
 And bie thie valyante hande
 Beesprengedd* all the mees† wythe gore.

* Sprinkled.

† Meadows.

Drawne bie thyne anlace * felle,
 Downe to the depthe of helle
 Thousandes of Decyanns went;
 Brystowannes, menue of myghte,
 Ydar'd the bloudie fyghte,
 And actedd deeds full quent.†

Oh thou, whereer (thie bones att reste)
 Thy Spryte to haunte delyghteth beste,
 Whetherr upponne the bloude-embrewedd pleyne,
 Orr whare thou keunst fromm farre
 The dysmall crye of warre,
 Orr seest somme mountayne made of corse of sleyne;
 Orr seest the hatchedd ‡ stede,
 Ypraunceynge o'er the mede,
 And neighe to be amenged § the poynctedd speeres;
 Orr ynne blacke armoure staulke arounde
 Embattell'd Brystowe, once thie grounde,
 And glowe ardurouse || onn the Castle steeres;

Orr fierye round the mynsterr glare;
 Lette Brystowe styлле be made thie care;
 uarde ytt fromme foemenne & consumynge fyre;
 Lych Avones streame ensyrke ** ytte rounde,
 Ne lette a flame enharme the grounde,
 Tylle ynne one flame all the whole worlde expyre.

* Sword. † Strange. ‡ Covered with achievements. § Among.
 || Burning. ** Encircle.

That the Song to Ella is not a production of the fifteenth century is a position not to be shaken, however sophistry may evade, falsehood assert, or impudence deny. It is evidently composed in that devious and irregular manner, which has been called the Pindaric. What shall we think of a Pindaric ode in the reign of Edward the fourth? It is well known that this novelty was reserved for the capricious ambition of Cowley's Muse.*

About this period, Mr. Barrett, a surgeon of Bristol, had projected a history of Bristol, and was *about to afford the antiquary, and every favourer of learning, much curious and recondite intelligence.*† But his work was suspended for the want of materials; and the discovery of the ancient poems and records having reached his ear, he eagerly obtained them from Catcott and no doubt,

* For several of the critical remarks found in this volume, I am indebted to Dr. Warton, a man in whose comprehensive mind was united the severest reasoning of the Stagyrte, with the fire of Longinus.

† So says Bryant.

blessed his stars at the accession of so much matter, that, illustrated with notes critical and explanatory, would swell his volume's price at least five shillings.

What we wish from interestedness to be true, we generally believe with catholic faith. Mr. Barrett wanted the poems to be authentic, and he did not for a moment doubt their authenticity.

But the sister of Chatterton, who was only three years older than he, betrayed some scepticism.

Chatterton, with the true spirit of authorship, delighted to read his works to his friends. He had always either a manuscript of parchment or paper in his pocket. When he went home from the attorney's office, before he could find time for salutations to his mother and his sister, they witnessed fire in each eye, and paper in each hand!

"Mary!" he would say, "I have got the cleverest thing for you imaginable. It is worth half a crown merely to have a sight of it, and to hear me read it to you."

He would then produce his parchment and read. If his sister attended, he would steal his eye from the page to observe how she was affected by his favourite passages; but if she minded her needle-work more than the poetry, he would betray great indignation, and leave her in displeasure.

Of these productions, Chatterton seemed never tired of reading the poem *On our Lady's Church*. He read it thrice to his sister. She marked this circumstance and insisted he had made it. "Why, Mary," said he, "do you think so?"—"Your style," replied the sister, "is easily to be discovered in it." "Well, Mary," whispered Chatterton, "I confess I made this, but don't you say any thing about it."*

Chatterton having succeeded in palming his parchments as monuments of old english genius upon the historian of Bristol, was incited to collect more

* See Mrs. Newton's second letter.

manuscripts for him, always applying the argument of the iron chest.

He alternately invoked the Muse for Rowley, and consulted Spreight's glossary of antiquated english. Mr. Capel, having caught him sitting over a large volume, interrogated him, saying, "Well, Thomas, what book are you poring over?" "*I am,*" said Chatterton, "*engaged by Spreight. I am studying to understand the old language, in which the manuscript-poems are written that were found in the iron chest!*"

But Chatterton studied his glossaries and etymological english lexicons without much skill. He seems to have been persuaded that no other ingredient was necessary for his fiction, than old words; and careless or ignorant of the application, which required the nicest conduct and caution, he presumed he had accomplished his design, by introducing as many ancient terms, and of any antiquity, as he could collect. He viewed ancient language as all of one age, and of one district. In dictionaries of old english, he saw words detached and

separated from their context; these he seized and combined with others, without considering their relative or other accidental signification. Here too he found the peculiarities of northern and southern dialects, thrown together for general explanation: these he carelessly blended, not observing their respective local appropriations. Thus has he fabricated a factitious ancient diction, at once obsolete and heterogeneous, anomalous in every respect, such as never could have been in use at an æra of antiquity, and would not have been more understood in the fifteenth than the eighteenth century.

A little before he invoked the Muse for Rowley, the companions of Chatterton observed in him extraordinary fits of poetic enthusiasm; particularly when walking in the meadows near Redcliff church.

“There was one spot in particular,” says Mr. Smith, “full in view of the church, where he seemed to take particular delight. *He would frequently lay himself down, fix his eyes upon the*

church, and seem as if he was in a kind of trance. Then on a sudden, and abruptly, he would tell me, that steeple was burnt down by lightning; that was the place where they formerly acted plays."

There is no doubt but Chatterton was then labouring with the inspiration of the Muse, which is scarcely a fiction in the breast of real genius.

While Chatterton lived with Mr. Lambert, he had much leisure to indulge in literary pursuits. He had so little of his master's business to do, that sometimes he was not detained two hours in a day from his favourite object. And he frequently sat up all night, and wrote by moon-light. Mrs. Newton says, "That she heard him frequently say he found he could write best towards the full of the moon; at which period, as if the immediate presence of that luminary added to the inspiration, he would consecrate the night to the Muses."

The multiplicity of his works, and the short time allowed him for producing them, has excited astonishment.

But our wonder will cease when we reflect, that besides losing no moment of his time, he preserved a temperate restriction over the grosser pleasures of sense. It is recorded that he scarcely ever touched meat, and drank only water, When little more than a child, he would often refuse to take any thing but bread and water, even if it happened that his mother had a hot meal; alledging "*he had a work in hand, and he must not make himself more stupid than God had made him.*"

He was, therefore, eminently temperate, and his progress was proportioned to that clearness of ideas, and quickness of conception, which are the fruits of temperance.

Before he produced the works of his intellect, there was some mechanical labour required; for it would have been irreconcilable to exhibit the poetry of the fifteenth century, on the writing paper of his contemporaries.

It required some pains to get his manuscripts ready. It was necessary to give them an air of antiquity. And

to effect this, he had to smoke-dry them up the chimney, and hold them over the candle.

His ingenuity devised a variety of modes to *Rowleyize* his parchments, and in support of my assertion I shall produce positive evidence.

Mr. Rudhall, a native of Bristol, and formerly an apprentice to Mr. Gresley, an apothecary in that city, says, that Chatterton having called on him one evening at his master's house, he saw him lug a piece of parchment out of his pocket, on which were written words in a character he could not decypher. That having smiled at Mr. Rudhall's fruitless attempts of investigation, he held the parchment over the candle that stood on the table of the apartment, which changed the colour of the ink, and made the manuscript appear black and a little contracted.

Mr. Gardner knew Chatterton intimately, and used frequently to walk with him about the streets of Bristol. In these walks he displayed all the

communicativeness of his age. He once affirmed, before Mr. Gardner, that "*It was very easy for a person who had studied antiquity, with the aid of a few books, which he could name, to copy the style of the ancient poets so exactly, that the most skilful observer should not be able to detect him: no,*" said he, "*not Mr. Walpole himself.*"

Mr. Gardner was also an eye-witness of the method he devised to Rowleyize his manuscripts.

Walking one morning with Chatterton in Bristol, the youth stopped at a breeches-maker's shop in Maryport-street, the next door, towards Peter-street, to Tanner's the barber, and three doors above the Swan Inn. Here Chatterton produced a piece of parchment, and having borrowed some yellow ochre of the breeches-maker, he rubbed the parchment in several places in streaks. He then rubbed it on the ground, which was dirty, several times; and afterwards crumpled it in his hand, exclaiming, during the operation, "that is the way to antiquate it."

He said at the conclusion of his labour, that it would do pretty well, but he could do it better were he at home.

By the manner in which I have recorded these anecdotes, I shall, doubtless, be thought by some the advocate of forgery. My sentiments are these. I would advise no man to forge the works of Abraham Newland, for if he does, he will be assuredly hanged. But I think there is no more harm in forging poems for a priest of the fifteenth century, than there would be in writing a satire on the credulity of Milles and Bryant, than whom two more rebouftable champions never mounted in succession a wooden stage.

Every man of critical taste will rejoice at the fiction of Chatterton. Independent of the beauty of his poetry, the fiction produced a controversy which has enlightened the human mind. Milles and Bryant, hoped to impose on the world by the bulk of their books; they piled up quarto upon quarto, and expected because

their labours were gigantic they should contend with truth and heaven. But subtilty, though it may fill volumes, is feeble, when opposed to truth. Warton came forward; and at his voice Milles and Bryant vanished from public notice like spectres at the crowing of chanticleer. The analysis of Warton extended the boundaries of knowledge, while it decided the controversy. It was not from the complexion of ink or of parchment, from the information of contemporaries, the tales of relations, the recollections of apprentices, and the prejudices of friends, nor even from the dooms-day-book, pedigrees in the herald's office, armorial bearings, parliamentary rolls, inquisitions, indentures, episcopal registers, epitaphs, tomb-stones and brass-plates, that he finally and effectually adjusted the dispute; but by argument drawn from principles of taste, from analogical experiment, from familiarity with ancient poetry, and from the gradations of composition.

On the exhibition of the ancient

poems which had been found in the iron chest, Chatterton not only enjoyed the acquaintance of Mr. Catcott and Mr. Barrett, but obtained from them some pecuniary compensations for his fragments of Rowley. But he seems not to have been perfectly satisfied with these patrons. For in a satirical poem he ridiculed the superstition of Barrett, and exhibited with much ludicrousness the ascent of Catcott to St. Nicholas' Tower, which it was his duty to keep in repair.

He appears to have nourished an invincible contempt for Bristol, a contempt not affected but sincere. But for this he deserved reproof. He was mortified because the inhabitants of Bristol were insensible to the beauty of Rowley's muse. But the inhabitants of Bristol were not children of Apollo, they were sons and daughters of Mammon. Their genius was not literary but commercial. Though Orpheus might have had the power to soften the rocks and bend the knotted oaks of Clifton, yet the Bristolians would have been insensible

to the harmony of his lyre. Poetry was not their element. When they sought relaxation from their primary pursuit of heaping up riches, they found it not in the Muses, but raree-shows. And Catcott has acquired more immortality at Bristol by ascending by a rope to the top of St. Nicholas' church spire, than Rowley by his pastoral of Elinouxe and Juga, or his chorus to Godwyn and Ella.

The friendship, however, of Mr. Barrett and Mr. Catcott, was not without advantage to Chatterton. Their acquaintance introduced him into the company of respectable families, and it was remarked that his ambition very sensibly encreased. He would frequently speak in raptures of the projects he had formed for his future success. When in spirits, he would enjoy his rising fame, and, confident of advancement, he would promise his grandmother, his mother and sisters that they should be partakers of his greatness.

About this time, in 1768, Chatter-

ton also was admitted to the acquaintance of Mr. Clayfield, the most amiable of his friends. This gentleman was a distiller in Castle-street, whose love of reading discovered a liberal mind. Chatterton delighted in his company, and would read to him out of Thompson's Masque, and Pope's Homer. He borrowed of him many books; and, among others, Fuller's Church Worthies.

In the middle of 1768, at the age of little more than sixteen, Chatterton produced an extemporaneous poem, that would not disgrace the sacred muse of David. It beathes the purest strain of piety. It may be lisped by the babe in the cradle, repeated by the school-boy, and uttered at the altar of every house of prayer.

THE RESIGNATION.

O GOD, whose thunder shakes the sky;
Whose eye this atom globe surveys;
To thee, my only rock, I fly,
Thy mercy in thy justice praise.

The mystic mazes of thy will,
The shadows of celestial light,
Are past the pow'r of human skill,—
But what th' Eternal acts is right.

O teach me in the trying hour
When anguish swells the dewy tear,
To still my sorrows, own thy pow'r,
Thy goodness love thy justice fear.

If in this bosom ought but Thee
Incroaching sought a boundless sway,
Omniscience could the danger see,
And Mercy look the cause away.

Then why, my soul, dost thou complain?
Why drooping seek the dark recess?
Shake off the melancholy chain,
For God created all to bless.

But ah! my breast is human still;
The rising sigh, the falling tear,
My languid vitals' feeble rill,
The sickness of my soul declare.

But yet with fortitude resign'd,
I'll thank th' inflicter of the blow;
Forbid the sigh, compose my mind,
Nor let the gush of mis'ry flow.

The gloomy mantle of the night,
Which on my sinking spirit steals,
Will vanish at the morning light,
Which God my East, my Sun, reveals.

I am persuaded that the pleasure afforded my readers by this ode will not be attended with satiety; that they will rise from it with an accession of Christian fortitude. Yet of Chatterton did Dean Milles say, that "*his mind was never disposed to religious meditations; but that it laboured under the burden of describing the pleasures of virtue, and the rewards of religion.*"

On reading this *requiem* from Dean Milles over the grave of Chatterton, who is not disposed to exclaim,—what conscious heart does not utter,—

" I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall this poet be,
When thou liest howling ! "

No poet was ever more entitled to the reputation of diligence, and the praise of application. In this year, 1768, he wrote the tragedy of *Ella*, which is, perhaps, the noblest production of Chatterton's genius. It is a representation of natural affections, a drama that will be interesting while

the human breast has solicitude to be raised, or sympathy to be awakened.

Of this tragedy the agents are Ælla, Celmonde, Hurra and Bertha. It opens with Celmonde making a soliloquy, in which he discovers a strong passion for Bertha, deprecates his impending marriage with Ælla, and in the excess of his mortification, meditates the death of his love, his friend and himself.

Next follows a dialogue between Ælla and Bertha, who have just been joined in wedlock; a dialogue replete with *sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo*. Nothing can be more happy. The remembrance and description of their mutual passion, the discovery each made of symptoms too decided to be mistaken, when the guests were carousing and laughing in the hall; the congratulations on their own happiness, and their interchange of vows of constancy; every sentence is the animated expression of the heart.

Celmonde now dissembles his emotions, and, after wishing Ælla and Bir-

tha the blessings of heaven, calls for the Song of the Minstrels.

This first chorus, or mynstrels' song, is a perfect pastoral; an edifice not less solid than beautiful. It would be a species of profanation to transcribe only a part, and I have not room for the whole. I refer my reader to Chatterton. The invocation of the swain to the maid Alice to stop, has all the tender eloquence of love, Ælla, after this song, calls for one that *marriage blessings tell*; and two other choruses of minstrels follow in quick succession, abounding with natural sentiments and apposite imagery.*

Human happiness is of short dura-

* Of the minstrels' songs chaunted on this occasion, the metre of the second is modelled after an ode in Tom Durfey's *Pills to purge Melancholy*.

Mie husbande, Lord Thomas a forrester boulde,
As ever clove pynne, or the baskette,
Does no cherysauncys from Elynour houlde,
I have ytte as soon as I ask ytte.

Go find out the Vicar of Taunton Dean,
And he'll tell you the banns they were asked,
A thumping fat capon he got for his pains,
And I skewer'd her up in a basket.

tion. In the full enjoyment of bliss, Ælla is informed by a messenger, that the Danes like myriads of locusts are invading the coast; that Magnus and Hurra* are the leaders of the hostile bands, and that only Ælla is able to oppose them.

On hearing this intelligence, the mournful distraction of Bertha, and the manly grief of Ælla fills every breast with emotion; and their tenderness founded on virtue, while it steals on our esteem is confirmed by our approbation.

After many struggles between love and glory, the warrior predominates in Ælla's breast, and he leaves the *vyrgyn brydall bedde for the bedde of warre*.

Celmonde here makes a soliloquy, animated, impressive and appropriate;

* *Hubba* would be the right reading, as Chatterton well knew from these lines in his favourite Thomson's *Masque*.

The valiant Hubba bites the bloody field,
With twice six hundred Danes around him strow'd.

a soliloquy which in every respect transcends that of Glenalvon in Douglas.

These personages having withdrawn, the Danish army, headed by its chieftains Magnus and Hurra, is introduced. A long dialogue ensues between the chiefs, haughty, scornful and vituperative; a dialogue evidently suggested to Chatterton by the contention between Achilles and Agamemnon.*

Much characteristical language having been exchanged by the leaders of the Danish army, a messenger arrives with the intelligence that the army of Ælla is at hand. In wording the intelligence much art is displayed. Ælla by one single image is magnified to a hero.

* Chatterton in this scene may be plainly tracked to the snow of Homer's Translator. Witness one coincidence out of many.

Thou dog in forehead but *in heart* a deer.

Pope's Homer.

Strynge bulle in boddie, lyoncelle *in harte*.

Ælla. p. 249. l. 6.

Dysordre throughe our hoaste
Is fleyng, borne onne wynges of Ælla's name!

It should not escape notice that the speech of the messenger is in blank verse; a metre unknown in the age of Rowley, and first practised in England by the Earl of Surry; a nobleman memorable for his chivalry, his sonnets and love of the fair Geraldine.

The Danes having retired, Ælla and Celmonde appear at the head of their forces, who are impatient for battle.

To the battle they march, and in the next scene their success is discovered by the disorder of the Danes, who flee on all sides, and of whom the leader, Magnus, is slain.

Celmonde next appears soliloquizing. Of this soliloquy the initial line is taken from Shakespear; and the description of the celestial motions is borrowed from Pope's version of Homer. The purpose of the soliloquy is to develope the discomfiture of the Danes, to shew that his passion for Birtha is unabated, and discover the

plan he has meditated to gain possession of her person.

The next scene returns to the habitation of Birtha whom Egwina is endeavouring to console for the absence of her lord; and, who, to assuage her perturbation calls for a song from the Minstrels.

This Minstrel's song is unrivalled for its pathetic tenderness. It is the moans of a damsel over her dead lover. The thought was evidently suggested to Chatterton's muse by the affecting passages of the song which Ophelia warbles in her mournful distraction; but with the exception of one or two combinations of phrases, the whole belongs to Chatterton. I doubt whether the mass of English poetry can furnish an elegy that has more power over the affections, or that more sensibly interests the heart.

THE MYNSTRELLES' SONGE.

O ! synge untoe mie roundelaie,
O ! droppe the brynie teare wythe mee,
Daunce ne moe atte hallie daie,
Lycke a reynynge ryver bee;
 Mie love ys dedde,
 Gon to hys deathe-bedde,
 Al under the wyllowe tree.

Blacke hys cryne as the wyntere nyghte,
Whyte hys rode as the sommer snowe,
Rodde hys face as the mornynge lyghte,
Cals he lyes ynne the grave belowe;
 Mie love ys dedde,
 Gon to hys deathe-bedde,
 Al under the wyllowe tree.

Swote hys tyngue as the throstles note,
Quycke ynn daunce as thoughte canne bee,
Defte hys taboure, codgelle stote,
O! hee lyes bie the wyllowe tree:

Mie love ys dedde,
Gonne to hys deathe-bedde,
Alle underre the wyllowe tree.

Harke! the ravenne flappes hys wynges,
In the briered delle belowe;
Harke! the dethe-owle loude dothe synge
To the nyghte-mares as heie goe;

Mie love ys dedde,
Gonne to hys deathe-bedde
Al under the wyllowe-tree.

See! the whyte moone sheenes onne hie;
Whyterre ys mie true loves shroude;
Whyterre yanne the mornynge skie,
Whyterre yanne the evenynge cloude;

Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to ys deathe-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Heere, uponne mie true loves grave,
Schalle the baren fleurs be layde,
Nee one hallie Seynete to save
Al the celness of a mayde.

Mie love ys dedde,
Gonne to his deathe-bedde,
Alle under the wyllowe tree.

Wyth mie hondes I'll dente the brieres
Round his hallie corse to gre,
Ouphante fairie, lyght your fyres,
Heere mie boddie styll schall bee.

Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Comme, wythe acorne-coppe and thorne,
Drayne mie hartys blodde awaie;
Lyfe and all yttes goode I scorn,
Daunce by nete, or feast by daie.

Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys deathe-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree

Waterre wytches, crownde wythe reytes,
Bere mee to yer leathalle tyde
I die; I comme; my true love waytes
Thos the damselle spake and dyed.

The scene changes to the field of conquest, where Ella is found smarting under his wounds, recalling to his breast the image of Birtha, and vociferating for a steed to convey him to her presence.

In the mean time Celmonde has reached Bristowe, where he acquaints the tender Birtha that Ella is sore wounded, and easily persuades her to mount before him and fly to her husband.

They depart. Night comes on. And the emotions of Birtha, when they enter a deep forest, are displayed in an exclamation, which, however characteristic and beautiful, is obviously a copy of that which Almeyda makes in Congreve's *Mourning Bride*.

The darkness of the night, and the solitude of the forest, conspires to facilitate the design of Celmonde upon the virtue of Birtha. He declares his passion; but finding that she is not to be melted by his words and endearments, he is about to have recourse to brutal violence, when the cries of

the unfortunate Birtha call Hurra and a party of Danes to her assistance, who are roving in the forest. A fight ensues. Celmonde slays many Danes, but is at last slain himself by the sword of Hurra.

The dying speech of Celmonde is exactly modelled after the last words which Shakespear puts into the mouths of his expiring heroes; and, indeed the whole forest scene bears a close resemblance to that in the Two Gentlemen of Verona, where Silvia is saved from the ravishment of Proteus by the interposition of the outlaws.

The roving Danes are not without feeling for a damsel in distress. They compassionate the situation of Birtha, and hope to procure their own pardon by restoring her to Ella. Birtha assures them of every tenderness, and apostrophizes the deceased Celmonde in nearly the same words that Prince Harry does Hotspur.

Maie ne thie cross-stone of thie cryme bewree!
Maie all-menne ken thie valoure, fewe thie mynde! *

In the scene that follows, Ella appears at Bristol feasting his imagination with the vision of his Birtha. But alas! no Birtha is to be found. His servants cannot account for her flight, and in the tumult of disappointment and jealousy he stabs himself in the breast. Before this he discovers all the starts and pauses of modern tragedy; and he is evidently formed from the school of Dryden, brave, enterprising, intrepid, and invincible by every power but that of love.†

While Ella is bleeding on the ground, Birtha is introduced accompanied by Hurra and his party. The fair fame of Birtha is cleared up. The indignation of jealousy gives way to the ten-

* Thy ignominy sleep with thee in the grave,
But not remember'd in thy epitaph.

Henry IV.

† In this scene there may be many combinations of phrases traced to Shakespear; such for example, as *lusty paramour*.

derness of love in the breast of the dying Ella; he reproves himself for his suspicions, and dies in the arms of his faithful bride, who soon after breathes her last,

Coereyke, the successor to Ella in power, laments the untimely fate of the lovers, and like the ancient lord in *Romeo and Juliet*, consoles himself with the project of raising a monument to their memory.

Such is the *Tragedy of Ella*, whose antiquity, to appropriate another's figure, is the light blue cloud of the morning, which the first sun-beam dissipates or destroys.

In contemplating the works of Chatterton the mind is lost in the mixed sensations of delight and astonishment; delight from the magic of his song, and astonishment that poems blazing now with sublimity, gliding now in the stream of melody, and anon melting every breast by their exquisite tenderness, should have been produced at an age, before other poets of eminence, whether Shakespear, Milton or Gray,

felt any talent for embodying thought, or aspired to give harmony to the cadence of their verse. We have all read of early efforts of genius, but such a dazzling miracle of poetry, such a youthful magician of the Muses, the history of literature has never before recorded.

Conscious of his superior genius and attainments, Chatterton at this period felt a secret longing for the patronage of the great; ignorant that *a patron was one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help!* He knew Horace Walpole was busied in the study of antiquities, and hoped to find in him a kindred mind.

To Horace Walpole he wrote, offering to furnish him with some accounts of a series of eminent painters who had flourished at Bristol, at the same time mentioning the discovery of the old poems, and enclosing as a specimen an ode in alternate rhyme, on the death of Richard the First.

Walpole unconscious who Chatterton was, and probably not having the most remote idea that he was the son of a sexton, but of sentiments superior to his plebeian descent; Walpole, I say, viewing him through the medium of his letter, as a person unbending his mind by the pursuits of elegant literature; impressed, I observe, with this vision, he replied to the Letter of Chatterton in a strain courtly, kind and ingratiating; (take his words gentle reader.) “Sir,” says Mr. Walpole, “*I cannot but think myself singularly obliged by a gentleman with whom I have not the pleasure of being acquainted; and I give you a thousand thanks for your kind letter, and for the very obliging offer you make me of communicating your mss. to me. What you have already sent me is very valuable and full of information.*”

“*I shall be happy to lay up any notices you will be so good as to extract for my Anecdotes, and send me at your leisure; and I flatter myself, sir, from the humanity and politeness you have*

already shewn me, that you will give me leave to consult you.

“ I am, sir,
your much obliged and
obedient humble servant,
HORACE WALPOLE.

“ P. S. Be so good as to direct to
Mr. Walpole, Arlington-street.”

On the receipt of this letter Chatterton wrote again to Walpole, enclosing *A Historie of Peyncters yn England, Bie Thomas Rowlie*; together with some more specimens of ancient poetry.

To the second letter of Chatterton Walpole replied without delay, desiring further particulars of Rowley and his poems. Chatterton, ingenuous, inexperienced, and communicative, not only furnished him with a memoir of Rowley, but imparted the history of his own life; pathetically observing, that “ he was the son of a poor widow, who

supported him with great difficulty; that he was apprentice to an attorney, but had a taste and turn for more elegant studies, and expressed a wish that Mr. Walpole would assist him with his interest in emerging out of so dull a profession, by procuring him some place in which he could pursue his natural bent."

In communicating this intelligence there was a great want of judgment, of which Chatterton himself was afterwards fully sensible. "Had I," said Chatterton to a friend, "concealed my circumstances, Walpole would have preserved his obsequiousness; he would have been the ready instrument of ushering my work before the public: but when I acquainted him that I was an attorney's apprentice, the son of a poor widow, who with great difficulty supported me,—from that instant I was despised by the Honourable Horace Walpole."

Walpole having received the letter which so movingly detailed the indigent condition of Chatterton, felt no

longer any desire to enrich the future editions of his *Anecdotes of Painting*, with Chatterton's manuscripts, but all his respect for them and his correspondent vanished, as if by the stroke of an enchanter's wand.

He communicated the poems, at some literary club, to that great son of song, Mr. Mason, and *the self-supported melancholy Gray*; (poor souls! compared to Chatterton, revelling in luxury) who in the true spirit of established authors, damned with faint praise the spirit-stirring stanzas of Abbot John.*

Having thus bandied about the poems of Chatterton at the club, Walpole wrote again to the youth, but alas! in how different a strain from that of his first epistle. He was now as profuse of his advice, as he had been before of his compliments, and to preclude all future solicitations, he pleaded

* The stanzas Chatterton enclosed in his letter.

mediocrity himself! "*I am,*" said Walpole, "*a man of no interest;* and I think that in duty and gratitude to your mother, who has straightened herself to breed you up to a profession, you ought to labour at it without repining, that in her old age you may absolve your filial debt. When you have made a fortune, you may unbend yourself with the studies consonant to your inclinations.*"

"Ps. I have communicated your transcripts of the poems to able judges, who are by no means satisfied with their authenticity."

That Chatterton was chagrined at the altered tone of Walpole, will be readily conceived. He replied, that "he was not able to dispute with a person of the learning of Mr. Walpole, and demanded back his manuscripts."

It happened that on receiving this letter, Walpole was preparing for a

* He was usher of the exchequer, and held also the lucrative posts of comptroller of the pipe and clerk of the estreats.

journey into France, to gratify his hankering after *virtu*, and improve himself in the *savoir vivre*. The greatness of this expedition dismissed every other thought from his mind, and he neglected Chatterton and his poems, to embark for the land of fops, fidlers, and dancing-masters.

For two months Chatterton bore the neglect of Walpole with more than poetical fortitude; but at the end of two months his hour-glass of patience was run out. He knew not, and how could he know it, that Walpole was gone to France; he thought himself ill-treated, his breast was kindled into anger, and he wrote Walpole a letter spirited, dignified, and vituperative.

“ SIR,

“ I cannot reconcile your behaviour to me with the notions I once entertained of you. I think myself injured, sir; and did you not know my circumstances, you would not dare

to treat me thus. I have sent twice for my manuscripts, and have received no answer from you.

“THOMAS CHATTERTON.”

Walpole had just returned from France, when this letter was delivered at his house. He thought it singularly impertinent, and collecting both the manuscripts and letters of Chatterton, he returned him the whole in a blank cover.

Such was the treatment which Chatterton underwent from Horace Walpole, of whom George Gregory, D. D. and F. R. S. has become the apologist.

“Every impartial reader,” says Gregory, “will acquit Mr. Walpole of any ill treatment towards Chatterton. A youth of sixteen sends him poems, which those excellent judges, Mr. Gray and Mr. Mason, declare to be modern productions disguised in antiquated phrases; and the same youth acquaints him that he is the son of a poor widow, and clerk to an attorney, but that he

has a taste for politer studies, and hints a wish to be emancipated from the drudgery of his situation. Upon this intelligence Mr. Walpole could scarcely have acted more becomingly than he did. He gives a gentle hint of his suspicions of the authenticity of the poems which the young man sent him, and kindly admonishes him to leave the muses, and pursue the line of business in which he is placed."

Such drivelling would become a city merchant haranguing his clerks of the counting-house on the aldermanly virtue of prudence, and enforcing his argument by the example of Mr. Walpole; but it is beneath the dignity of the biographical page, and a flagrant insult to the understanding of an enlightened and generous public.

I appeal to the conscience of my reader; I request him to lay his hand upon his heart, and then answer with integrity and frankness, whether an application from suffering genius ought not to have made some impression on the mind of a man, conscious of the

transendent powers of the applicant,* ambitious himself of literary distinction, rioting in opulence and cultivating the acquaintance of the votaries to the muse.

He communicated the poems of Chatterton to Mason and Gray! but neither the author of *Caractacus*, nor the elegias in the Country Churchyard, would have encountered Walpole at the club, and enjoyed the blandishments of his smiles, had they not blended comparative riches with their talents for poetry, and been in no want of patronage. Their critical opinions would never have been asked by Walpole had their coats been out of fashion.

Nor is it true when Gregory says that Chatterton harboured no long or strong resentment against Mr. Walpole; for the praise Gregory cites from Chatterton about *Walpole's men-*

* Walpole calls Chatterton a youth of miraculous talents.

*tal taste, can be only considered as satire in disguise; for not long before he died, Chatterton, in his Memoirs of a Sad Dog, exhibited among the visitors of Sir Stentor Ranger, Walpole under the character of the redoubted Baron Otranto, a man who had spent his whole life in conjectures, and visited Sir Stentor on account of his ancient painted glass windows; that he was ravished with Robin Hood's Ramble melodiously chaunted by the knight's groom and dairy maid to the excellent music of a two-stringed violin and a bagpipe: a concert by the first masters in Europe could not have pleased the Baron so well: he imagined himself carried back to the age of his favourite hero Richard the Third.**

It is a position, I believe, generally admitted that though injuries may be atoned for and forgiven, insults admit of no compensation. They degrade the mind in its own esteem, and force

* Town and Country Magazine for 1770.

it to recover its level by revenge. Chatterton was not of a disposition to forget the treatment of Walpole.

Before I dismiss this subject, I will make one observation, which, it is a matter of surprise to me, was never made before.

Walpole very gravely descants upon the literary coinage and forgery of Chatterton, as if he could wash his own hands of the sin. But was not Walpole himself an egregious literary impostor? Did he not solemnly tell the world in the preface to the first edition of the castle of Otranto, that "*the manuscript was found in the library of an ancient catholic family in the north of England, and was printed at Naples, in the black letter in the year 1529, and that the translation was made by William Marshall?*"

Stand forth ye defamers and calumniators of Chatterton! Stand forth and say, whether Walpole be a jot less guilty of literary imposture.

The Castle of Otranto was no more found in the library of a catholic, than

the poems of Rowley were found in Redcliff church.*

In this year, 1769, Chatterton, however obscure his condition, was producing works that for more than thirty years were to raise a war of words in the literary world. Poetry employed both his waking and sleeping thoughts. By long practice he was become dextrous in the use of a language anticomodern, and modern antique: what at first had been effort, was improved into habit; and he had now less trouble to express in obsolete terms and quaint phrases, his conceptions of sentiment and felicities of fancy.

During this busy year of his life he produced, among several minor works, Godwyn, a tragedy, and the Battle of Hastings, a poem.

Of the tragedy of Godwyn, the spelling is ancient, but the diction and phraseology are modern.

* In the second edition of the Castle of Otranto, Walpole acknowledged himself its author.

When Chatterton wrote it he was warm from studying Mason's *Elfrida* and *Caractacus*.

Of this tragedy, every page presents one of those agents which compose the train of modern poetry. Nor is the appearance of these images only transient and incidental, as arising out of the course or tenour of a narrative or a speech. The author's propensity to personification is indulged to a far greater extent. The embodied passions, virtues and vices, of Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, a poem professedly allegorical, have not that amplitude of proportion, distinctness of figure, selection of picturesque attributes, discrimination, activity, and life, which constitute the personal creations of this tragedy. But the pretended Rowley preceded Spenser a century. I cite as an example, the portrait of Freedom with her attendants. It makes a chorus in *Godwyn*.

CHORUS TO GODWYN,

A TRAGEDY.

WHEN Freedom, dreste yn blodde-styned veste,
To everie knyghte her warre-songe sung,
Uponne her hedde wylde wedes were spredde ;
A gorie anlace bye her honge.

She daunced onne the heathe ;
She hearde the voice of deathe :
Pale-eyned affryghte, his harte of sylver hue,
In vayne assayled* her bosomme to acale ;†
She hearde onflemed‡ the shrieking voice of woe,
And sadnesse ynne the owlette shake the dale.

* Endeavoured

† freeze.

‡ undismayed

She shook the burled || speere,
 On hie she jeste § her sheelde,
 Her foemen ** all appere,
 And flizze ++ alonge the feelde.

Power, wythe his heafod ++ straught ||| ynto theskyes,
 Hys speere a sonne-beame, and his sheelde a starre,
 Alyche + to twaie * breddeynge ++ gronfyres ** rolls
 hys eyes,
 Chafthes * with hys yronne feete and soundes to war.

She syttes upon a rocke,
 She bendes before hys speere,
 She rises from the shocke,
 Wielding her owne in ayre.

Harde as the thonder doth she drive ytte on,
 Wytte scillye * wympled + gies ‡ ytte to his crowne,
 Hys longe sharpe spere, hys spreddyng sheelde is gon,
 He falles, and fallynge rolleth thousandes down.

War, goare-faced war, bie envie burld, arist.
 Hys feerie heaulme || noddynge to the ayre,
 Tenne bloddie arrowes ynne hys streynynge fyste—

* * * * *

armed, pointed	§ hoisted on high, raised	** foes, enemies
++ fly	++ head	stretched
		+ like
++ flaming	** meteors	* beäts, stamps
		* closely
+ mantled, covered	‡ guides	helmet.

Spencer must here yield the palm of allegoric poetry; for so perfect a model of allegoric delineation has never appeared in our language.

It is the fate of Chatterton to convict himself of forgery. His pretensions to antiquity are refuted by the excellence of his own poetry. A mediocrity of poetical talents would have succeeded much better in the imposture. He had too much genius to conduct and execute it. He conceived that his old poetry would be sufficiently marked by old words and old spelling. But he took no caution about thoughts and imagery, the sentiment and the substance. He had forgot, or never knew, or was not inclined to believe, that the garb of antiquity would but ill become the elegance of Pope, or the spirit of Dryden.

Such a delineation as that of *Freedom* in the tragedy of *Godwyn* was never produced in the infancy of composition. It was formed from the accumulated practise, experience and invention, of previous writers, who for ages

had been successively toiling for the use of posterity, and had supplied materials for future amplification and refinement. Poetry like other sciences, has its gradual accessions and advancements.

This tragedy is imperfect. It stops with the chorus.

The Battle of Hastings is supposed to have been written by Turgot, a monk; a Saxon in the tenth century: in this there is a trifling anachronism; for the Battle of Hastings did not happen till a hundred years after.

In the Battle of Hastings the author is not less exuberant than Homer, in describing deaths, distortions and wounds, rivers of blood and hills of slain, clattering of armour and showers of arrows.

Throughout this poem may be traced the imitation of Pope's Homer. But though Chatterton copied Pope's version, he has not servilely adopted Pope's words or form of expression, but in many instances he has improved upon his original.

In the Battle of Hastings the names of the Norman warriors agree with those printed in our histories, from the Chronicle of Normandy, and the Battle of Abbey Ran. This was considered by Milles and Bryant as peremptory internal evidence that Chatterton did not write it. But these names occur likewise in Fuller's Church Worthies, a book which, it is notorious, he was in the habit of consulting.

In the Battle of Hastings, Chatterton selected from history a commodious subject. It was not only susceptible of poetical ornament, and coincided with his predominant predilection for antiquated imagery, but it possessed the singular advantage of having the names of its heroes, on one side at least, enumerated at large in an original contemporary record.

But how comes it to pass that so many of the Normans are mentioned, and so few of the Saxons? It is strange that the original author, Turgot, an Anglo Saxon, should not have commemo-

morated more of his countrymen? Why does he dwell so largely, and almost solely, on the names of his enemies? For this obvious reason; Chatterton had no long roll of Saxon names to which he might refer. Of the Normans he had a list of eight hundred, from which he might chuse at pleasure. Not twenty Saxon names, including Harold's three brothers, Fosti, Girtha, and Leafyne, known from our historians, are here recited. These few Saxon names he took by memory from plays poems, novels, histories and other books of entertainment; and had he remembered more he probably would have inserted them.

The first part of the Battle of Hastings, I never could read without bursts of laughter; laughter of that obstinate kind which Homer calls *αἰετός*. It is difficult to make out what the author would be at. Whether his object be to raise terror, or provoke laughter.

It would be unjust to withhold a specimen of this poem from the

reader. See! in one of the earliest combats, how dexterously Duke William stoops his head to avoid having it broken.

Duke William drew again his arrow string,
An arrow with a silver head drew he;
The arrow dancing in the air did sing,
And hit Tosselyn's horse upon the knee.

At this brave Tosselyn threw his short horse-spear,
Duke William stooped to avoid the blow,
The iron weapon hummed in his ear,
And hit Sir Doullie Naibor on the brow:
Upon his helm so furious was the stroke,
It split his beaver and the rivets broke.

Such is the tenour of the first part of the Battle of Hastings. The whole action of the poem consists in its heroes knocking one another in the head, and would do for a battle of Greeks and Trojans just as well as for one of Normans and Saxons. But the second part is of a superior nature. It is for-

med on the model of Pope's *Illiad*. In recurring to Pope's version the author found the best stock of materials and embellishments for describing his battles; and, as Pope perpetually varies, dilates and adorns the simplicity of Homer, so Chatterton not unfrequently exceeds Pope in the rapidity, the glow and boldness of his imagination.

In the second part of the *Battle of Hastings*, the character of Tancerville is happily conceived and impressively delineated; he is not the mere warrior, but susceptible of the social energies. The episode of Girtha is skilfully conducted, and the altercation between him and his brother Harold is not without interest. But the whole poem abounds with such a torrent of similies, that the attention of the reader like the imagination of the author is a stranger to repose. The mind of the poet seems to have been throughout his composition in a state of turbulent effervescence; his eye, like the imagined bard of Shakespear, seems to have

been rolling in a fine phrenzy, glancing from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven.

Though it were to be wished that Chatterton could somewhat have repressed the career of his fancy, there are passages in this poem which all must admire; passages that blaze with magnificence and sparkle with illustration. It were injustice not to transcribe the description of a mountain convulsed by an earthquake, which he has taken for a simile.

As when the earth, torn by convulsions dire,
In realms of darkness hid from human sight,
The warring force of water, air and fire,
Burst from the regions of eternal night,
Through the dark caverns seek the realms of light;

Some lofty mountain, by its fury torn,
Dreadfully moves, and causes great affright
Now here, now there, majestic nods the bourn,
And awful shakes mov'd by the almighty force,
Whole woods and forests nod, and rivers change their
course.

Such poetry as this is the result of a long establishment of the arts and habits of composition. The versification is equally vigorous and harmonious, and is formed on a general elegance and stability of expression.

The whole poem of the Battle of Hastings exhibits both in the connection of words and sentences, a facility of combination, a quickness of transition, a rapidity of apostrophe, a frequent variation of form and phrase, and a firmness of contexture, to which our old english poets were utter strangers. In Gower, Chaucer and Lydgate, elegant descriptions, ornamental images, and melodious couplets, bear no proportion to pages of languor or mediocrity, to prolix prosaic details in rhyme, uninteresting and tedious. Like Addison's traveller in the desert who finds an unexpected fountain, if in the barren extent of a thousand miles we discover a solitary simile,

We bless our stars, and think it luxury !

But the Battle of Hastings is uniformly supported. It is throughout poetical and animated. We find in it few or no imbecilities either of thought or diction. Whole stanzas sparkle with that brilliancy, which did not appear in our poetry till towards the middle of the eighteenth century. The lines have all the tricks and trappings, all the sophistications of poetical style, belonging to those models which were popular when Chatterton wrote.

I am the more explicit on this subject, because as Doctor Warton has observed its determination affects the great lines of history and poetry, and even of general literature. If these poems were really written so early as the reign of Edward the Fourth, the entire system that has hitherto been framed respecting the progression of poetical composition, and every theory that has been established on the gradual improvements of taste, style and language, will be shaken and disarranged.

In the second part of the Battle of

Hastings. there is a description of Stonehenge, in which Turgot, its first writer, has anticipated every conjecture of the moderns! He has assigned to Stonehenge in the tenth century almost every origin which has been given to it in the eighteenth. He insinuates that it might have been a druidical temple, a monument erected in consequence of Hongist's massacre.

The Stonehenge of Chatterton discovers much power of description, and the desert scene is heightened by the image of the benighted traveller, beholding the smoke of the town he cannot reach, and without hope to shelter himself from the blast of the tempest.

Where fruytless heathes and meadows cladde in greie,
Save where derne hawthornes reare theyr humble head,
The hungrie traveller upon his waie
Sees a huge desarte alle arounde hym spredde,
The distaunte citie scantlie to be spedde,
The curlynge force of smoke he sees in vayne,

Tis too far distaunte, and hys onlie bedde
Iwimpled in hys cloke ys on the playne,
Whylste rattlynge thonder forrey oer his hedde,
And raines come down to wette hys harde uncouthlie
bedde.

A wondrous pyle of rugged mountaynes standes,
Placd on eche other in a dreare arraie,
It ne could be the worke of human handes,
It ne was reared up bie menne of claie.
Here did the Brutons adoration paye
To the false god whom they did Tauran name,
Dightynge hys altarre with greete fyres in Maie,
Roastyng their victims round aboute the flame,
’Twas here that Hengyst did the Brytons slee,
As they were mette in council for to bee.

In this poem the description of Kenwalche, the beauteous bride of Adhelm, seems to have filled with transport the breast of Dean Milles. “In what a torrent of similes,” says he, “has the poet celebrated the beauty of the knight’s absent fair!”

It is true, that in these similes the rosy lips, the snowy bosom, the au-

bern locks, and the taper arms of the Saxon dame are luxuriantly described; but this exhibition discovers a want of taste. It was not in this manner that Homer described his Helen. He left the imagination something to supply.

What winning graces, what celestial mien,
She moves a goddess, and she walks a queen!

In this poem nothing can be more suspicious, or more completely invalidate its pretensions to antiquity, than the terms of application and introduction to the comparisons, *as when, such was*, and the like; but particularly the affected repetitions of the things compared with the constant introduction of the illustrative adverb *so*.

Such is the poem of the Battle of Hastings, which in an imperfect state holds the mind in pleasing captivity, and makes every lover of just sentiments and apposite imagery lament, that the poet did not finish what he had so well begun and prosecuted.

In this year, 1769, Chatterton, with the desire natural to a young writer of seeing his works in print, became a contributor to the Town and Country Magazine. Of the pieces he contributed, two are filled with conjectures respecting Saxon heraldry, and the others are Saxon poems, written in the style of Ossian. Of these poems the felicity is not great. The author is often lofty, and he often makes his heroes discourse fustian with their own shadows.

He also sent to the Town and Country Magazine, an Ode on a Miniature Painter of Bristol, and an Account of Sir William Canynge, by Rowley. The ode was afterwards claimed by one Lockstone, a linen-draper of Bristol—

——— Tulit alter honores;
Sic vos non vobis———

But Lockstone wrote about the same quantity of the ode that Taylor did of

the sermon which he preached at the funeral of Johnson's wife.

In the account of Master Canynge, by Rowley, there is every internal evidence of fabrication. The names of the painter and the priest of St. Cuthbert, the idea of a church set *up in the air like a cross*, the rapid ordination of Canynge, the scolding of Mistress Pelham, and the lucky escape of our poor author in a *safe skin*, the recurrence of the word *mickle*;—the phrase *franke* from the power of kings, and *person* for man—the strained orthography, the flimsy disguise of a few terminal letters, the frequent short sentences and the general turn of style so antico-modern, and modern antique; all these are internal and undeniable proofs that the whole is a cheat. Rowley's style is not so ancient as that of Coriat's Crudities.

Of four eclogues which Chatterton wrote, the fourth was inserted in the Town and Country Magazine for 1769. These eclogues have no other pretensions to antiquity than the artificial

sprinklings of obsolete spelling, and sometimes of old words.

In the second eclogue, entitled Nygelle, there is a palpable imitation of a passage in Pope's Homer; and an anachronism occurs, which, unless the line be thought an interpolation, ought to have decided the controversy respecting the authenticity of the old poetry. There is mention made of the Turks before the name had an existence.

All these pieces rise above mediocrity, which is no small praise for pastoral poems. In Elinouxe and Juga, Chatterton has borrowed a passage from Gray; and it also should not escape notice that the best line in Rowley's Matlock Monody, is stolen from this pastoral.

Of the other poems admitted into the Rowley Volume, this is a proper place to take notice. The Ballad of Charity is an imitation of Christ's parable of the good Samaritan; and here enough is said; for the parables of our Saviour are too august to be placed in

competition with any mortal performance.*

The Bristow Tragedy, or the Death of Sir Charles Bawden, is a simple and pathetic ballad. It represents king Edward the fourth, sitting in the minster window to see Sir Charles executed. When Chatterton read this poem to his mother, she admired it, and asked him if he made it. He replied, I found the argument and versified it. In doing this he exerted his powers. His words are the images of things; the reader becomes a spectator.

* In the Ballad of Charity are the following lines:

The trammels of the palfry please his syght
For the *horse-millanare* his head with roses dighte.

In a note to the phrase *horse-millanare*, Chatterton very gravely says, "I believe this trade is still in being."—It is. There is a sadlers shop at Bristol, over whose door is inscribed John Wells, Horse Milliner, and before the door stands a wooden horse fancifully decorated with roses and ribbons. This shop Chatterton passed every day when he walked out with the blue-coat boys, and hence the idea. For it may be applied to him that *The trammels of the palfry pleas'd his sight, &c.*

The Dedication of our Lady's Church discovers the versatility of Chatterton's genius. It serves to shew that he was as good at a procession, as at a battle, or interlude, or an amorous dialogue.

ON

THE DEDICATION

OF

Our Ladie's Church.


SOONE as bryghte Sonne along the Skynne
Had sent his ruddie lyghte,
And Fayryes hyd ynne Oslippe cuppes
Till wish'd approche of nyghte;

The mattyn bell wyth shryllie sound
Reeckode throwe the aire,
A Troop of holie Freeres dyd
For Jesus Masse prepare:

Around the hyghe unsaynted Chyrche
Wyth holie Relyques wente,
And every Door and Poste aboute
Wythe Godlie thynges besprente.

Then Carpenter yn scarlette dreste
And mytred holilie,
From Mastre Canynge hys greate howse
Wythe rosarie dyd hie ;

Before hym wente a throng of Freeres,
Who dyd the Masse Songe synge ;
Behynde hym Mastre Canynge came,
Tryckd like a barbed Kynge.

And then a rowe of holie Freeres
Who dyd the Masse Song sound
The Procurators and Chyrche Reeves,
Next preste upon the ground.

And when unto the Chyrche they came,
A holie Masse was sange,
So lowdlie was theyr swotie Voyce,
The Heven so hie it range,

Then Carpenter dyd puryfie
The Chyrche to Godde for aie,
With holie Masses and good Psalmes,
Whyche hee dyd therein saie.

Then was a Sermon preched soon
Bie Carpynteere holie,
And after that another one
Ypreechen was bie mee,

Then alle dyd go to Canynges house
An Enterlude to playe,
And drynke hys Wyne and Ale so goode,
And praye for him for aie.

I believe it cannot be denied, that this church was consecrated a hundred years before the time of Canynge.

I have by this time made the reader familiar with the poetry of Rowley and Turgot; I shall close this subject by exhibiting a specimen of the genius of Abbot John.

ON THE MYNSTER.

WYTHE daityve steppe relygyonn dyghte yn greie,
Herr face of doleful hue,
Swyfte as a takel throwe bryghte heav'nn toke herr
waie,
And oft and ere anonn dydd saie,
Ah mee, whatte shalle I doe!

See Brystowe cittie, whyche I nowe doe kenne
Aryseing to mie vieve,
Thyckethrongde wythesoldyerrs and traffyque menne;
Botte seynctes I seen fewe.

Fitz Hardyng rose; he rose, lycke bryghte sonne
ynn the morne;

Fayre Dame, adrie thyne eyne,

Lette all thys greefe bee myne,

Forre I wylle reere thee uppe a mynsterr hie,

(And wylle a moncke bee shorne)

The toppe whereoff shall reachenn to the skie.

Thanne dydd the Dame replie;

I shall ne bee forlorne.

Heere wylle I take a cherysauniedd reste,

And spende mie daies upponne Fitz Hardyng's breste.

The spirit of Chatterton was depressed into despair by the repulse of Mr. Walpole. Neither books, nor walks in Redcliff meadows, nor the female face divine, any longer delighted him. Such was his mental wretchedness, so irksome was his condition, so gloomy was his despondency, that his understanding became perverted, and he formed the resolution to dissolve his union with visible nature.

Chatterton was at this juncture somewhat more than seventeen; his breast soared above a profession, sordid, servile and laborious; but his hopes of emancipation were blasted, he found his early blossoms withering in obscurity, and he sunk beneath the frowns of ignorant and insolent wealth.

Chatterton was not willing to quit the world, without making a Will, which differs from wills in general, that he bequeathes no money to any one, but his endowments of mind. In this will he partially developes his own character.

The imagination forms many pro-

jects which the heart has not resolution to execute. Chatterton did not yet commit the crime of suicide; he only made his will. This will he left in a desk to which Mr. Lambert had access; he shewed it to Mrs. Lambert, his mother; the old lady on reading it was filled with terror, and the scrivener, instead of privately, tenderly and seriously reproving his apprentice, and holding out to him the consolation of the Sacred Text, dismissed him with approbious reproaches from his service, in which he had continued two years, nine months and thirteen days, faithful in the acquittal of his duty, temperate in his living, and exemplary in conforming with the domestic hours of the house.

Turned out of doors by the attorney, the breast of Chatterton felt all the joy of a manumitted slave. His mind was not formed of common materials. It made him despise what others coveted. He could abstain for months from animal food, and be content with bread and water; he was indifferent to

accommodations, and could sleep upon the flint. These privations to him were scarcely negative infelicity; his positive unhappiness was caused by his tender sense of feeling.

This is the proper place to take a view of the moral conduct of Chatterton, during his apprenticeship with Mr. Lambert. We have both the testimony of Mrs. Newton and Mr. Thistlewaite, that he was exemplary in his habits. Of few young men in his situation it can be said, that during a course of nearly three years he was never once found out of the office at the stated hours of attendance, and only once exceeded the family hours, which was at Christmas, when he passed the evening with a party of friends under the roof of his mother, whose indulgence detained him till the hour of eleven.

In his attachment to females he appears rather in an amiable than an unamiable light. For the unhappy women who patrol the college green, and every street in Bristol, frightening the owls, and making night

hideous; for these unhappy creatures, accessible for a small pecuniary compensation, Chatterton discovered no inclination. If ever he was heard to exclaim, "Alas! the nymphs whose beauty raises a tumult in the city, rob my heart of rest,"—it was not the abandoned, nightly outcast who disturbed his tranquillity, but the charms of Maria, in whose countenance there was a dash of melancholy which could be only ascribed to a void of heart, to her want of some one object on whom to fix her affections.

In the tender charities of a son, he may be safely held up as a pattern to mankind. Whenever he was liberated from attendance on the office, he flew on the wings of affection to his grandmother, his mother and sister, whom he loved from the bottom of his heart. We saw him most evenings, says Mrs. Newton,* before nine, and he would

* Vide Mrs. Newton's Letter.

generally stay till the limits of his time, which was ten.

Dismissed from the scrivener, it was necessary for Chatterton to embrace some mode of life, that would secure him a subsistence. For the study of the law he entertained a supreme disgust; indeed such was the little progress he had made in it, that he expressed his inability to draw out his own clearance. His mother could not support him; the thoughts of trade sickened his heart; he had been invited by the booksellers to London; and this encouragement concurring with his ambition of intellectual eminence, he was determined to adopt the profession of an author, and hoped by the quickness of his fancy, the readiness of his language, and his facility of composition, to enter the Temple of Fame by the road of emolument.

If we may, however, credit the testimony of Mr. Thistlewaite, Chatterton had revolved more than one project in his breast. "*My first attempt,*" said he, "*shall be in the literary way. The pro-*

mises I have received are sufficient to dispel doubt; but should I, contrary to my expectation, find myself deceived, I will in that case turn methodist preacher."

Whether Chatterton from nature or education was qualified for a methodist preacher, is I think somewhat problematical.

To his passion for elegant literature, Chatterton also manifested one for politics, and had embraced, for I know not what reason, the patriotic party. In a long poem, entitled Kew Gardens, he satirized the Princess Dowager of Wales, together with Lord Bute and his partizans; and in *The Whore of Babylon*, his muse took a wider range, and spared none of the Ministry. For a political writer he seems to have been eminently qualified. Tergiversation he could easily reconcile to his conscience. In fact he held that man in contempt who could not write on both sides.

Dismissed from the service of the scrivener, Chatterton looked towards London, where he hoped to have his

labours rewarded by emolument, and his vanity gratified by praise.

From the Mæcenases of literature, the discerners and rewarders of intellectual merit, the Sosii of the metropolis, the enlightened booksellers of London; I say, from this fraternity, of whom Mr. Osborne recommended Johnson to buy a porter's knot—from these men, Chatterton simple, ingenuous and unexperienced, hoped for a remuneration proportionate to his literary industry.

It was on the 25th of April, 1770, that Chatterton arrived in London. I now picture him to my imagination entering the metropolis—that metropolis where Poetry raises her enchanting voice to heaven; where History arrests the wings of Time, and where Philosophy extends her intellectual empire.—I conceive the sensations of Chatterton. I conceive his fancy sporting on airy wing, like a meteor on the bosom of a summer cloud;* His first night is sleep-

* Vide Edmund to Michael.

less. He pants for the morning to fly to Mr. Edmunds, and Mr. Fell, and Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Dodsley. What a group of patrons! What! Oh! what a glorious prospect! London! exclaims the boy-bard, Good God! how superior is London to Bristol. Had Rowley been a Londoner instead of a Bristolian I might live by copying his works. Here my muse will be wooed by Mr. Edmunds, and Mr. Fell, and Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Dodsley, as the great Jove wooed Danaë in a shower of gold!

The dreams of Chatterton were however chastized before the evening, for the lodgings he got were a garret-room at the house of one Mr. Walmsley, a plaisterer in Shoreditch.

Indeed it is of little importance to a poet, whether he inhabit a princely chamber, or a cock-loft. His mind is abstracted from an attention to external objects. In the hour of inspiration he would be insensible to the magnificence of a room in the king's palace. Give him but a stool, a table and a candlestick, and he is content to lucubrate

in a garret.—This is the glorious triumph, this is the high prerogative and imperial power of genius, that happy in its own sensations, it can despise worldly grandeur.

Chatterton had been introduced to the lodgings of Mr. Walmsley, the plaisterer in Shoreditch, by his cousin Mrs. Ballance, who dwelt under the same roof.

I have before observed that he occupied a room in the garret; a situation which every son of Apollo prefers to the first floor, because in a garret there is a freedom from noise, and an abstraction from amusements.

In this ærial abode he was occupied by the tasks of his *patrons*; tasks which required equal industry and versatility of parts. A history of England, a history of London, a magazine, essays in the daily papers, and songs for the public gardens, were among his actual or projected undertakings.

Of Chatterton's disposition and views, something has been gathered from Mrs. Ballance. Mrs. Ballance informed

Mr. Croft that Chatterton was as proud as Lucifer; that he very soon quarrelled with her for her familiarity in calling him "Cousin Tommy;" scornfully asking whether she thought Shakespeare would have tolerated being called *Billy*? he would seldom suffer his room to be swept, because poets hated brooms. And when she remonstrated that writing poetry-nonsense would never make the pot boil, the inflamed youth fell into a fit of foaming, frantic rage, and storming about the room, affrighted the dame not a little, by telling her, he hoped, with the blessing of God, very soon to be sent prisoner to the tower, and that would make his fortune!

Chatterton had already connected himself as intimately as he could with the patriots of the day, and was extravagantly elated with an introduction to Alderman Beckford.

To resume the gossip of Mrs. Balance—Thomas would look stedfastly in a person's face, without speaking, or seeming to see the person, for a

quarter of an hour or more, till it was quite frightful; during which time the shrewd woman supposed his wits were wandering.

The testimony of Mr. Walmsley was that he never saw any harm of him—that he was always very civil when they met in the house by accident, but that he could hardly keep his eyes or hands off the wenches.

Under the same roof with Mr. Walmsley dwelt his wife and a neice. The girl was about the age of Chatterton, and her evidence was that she took him more for a mad young man than any thing else, he would have such flights and vagaries; that he was a sad rake, and terribly fond of the women, and would sometimes be saucy to her.—The young lady further observed, that he was good tempered, agreeable and obliging, but deadly proud and haughty; that he never touched meat, and drank only water, but that nothing was too good for him, nor was any to be too good for his grandmother, mother and sister hereafter.

This niece had a brother living with Mr. Walmsley, who was the bedfellow of Chatterton. The boy informed Mr. Croft that Chatterton used to sit up all night reading and writing; that he never came to bed till very late, often three or four o'clock; but that he was always awake, when he waked; and got up at the same time.

In feeding, his temperance was eminently remarkable. He did not, like Pope, oppress his stomach with repletion; nor did he ever, like Johnson, degenerate into a Hottentot.

He lived chiefly upon a halfpenny roll, or a tart and some water, he could have satisfied his appetite with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. He did not, however, wholly abstain from meat, for he was once or twice seen to take a sheep's tongue out of his pocket.

While Chatterton lodged with Mr. Walmsley, he did not suffer his love of song to triumph over his zeal for his country; but wrote in defence of its laws, and the preservation of its civil

and religious liberties. He became a flaming patriot; he was ambitious to blaze forth a whig of the first magnitude; and in the pride of his heart the youthful politician would assert, that "he would settle the nation before he had done."

Honours accumulated fast upon him. He found means to get introduced to Mr. Wilkes, and addressed a letter to the Lord Mayor, in which there was such bold reprehension of the ministry, and such skilful flattering of his Lordship, that Chatterton was not only admitted to his presence, but received with the accents of encouragement.

Elated by the success of his first essay, he addressed a second to the Lord Mayor, in which there is much popular cant and virulence of invective against government for rejecting the remonstrance of the city of London.

The livery of London having presented a petition to his Majesty, praying a redress of grievances, and the petition being for more than eight months unanswered, they prepared a remon-

strance, and appointed the Lord Mayor to deliver it at the throne. The remonstrance complained that the freedom of election had been violated by his Majesty's ministers, and prayed that they might be dismissed.

The remonstrance was presented to the King on his throne by the Lord Mayor, who was accompanied by two aldermen, the sheriffs and one hundred and fifty three of the common council and the committee of the livery, in their gowns.

His Majesty received them seated on his throne, when, the remonstrance being read by Sir James Hodges, his Majesty replied that " he should always be ready to receive the requests and listen to the complaints of his subjects, but that it gave him great concern that any of them should have been so far misled as to offer him an address and remonstrance, the contents of which he could not but consider as disrespectful to himself, injurious to parliament and irreconcilable to the principles of the constitution."

In this discussion of the reigning ministerial measures, Chatterton appears to have made Junius his model. He was emulous of his scurrilous tone, and strove like him to point his satire and animate his page.

But Chaterton's dream of political greatness was soon dissolved. His hopes were centered in Mr. Beckford; but Mr. Beckford suddenly died, and his death disenchanted the fairy land around him.

That Chatterton wrote not from principle, but for emolument, there is sufficient evidence. He could espouse either party with equal enthusiasm. He wrote both an invective against, and an encomium on government, for rejecting the remonstrance.

The death of Beckford, however, caused in him a temporary depression of spirits. Beckford was his ladder to fortune: he had promised Mrs. Ballance, through his interest with him, the Trinity House; and, when he heard of his death, he exclaimed that "he was ruined."

He now invoked the Weeping Muse, and had recourse to elegy. He was practised in writing elegies. He had before mourned the death of Mr. Phillips, and of a tabby cat, in strains tender, pathetic and moving. Beckford was now dead, and he calls on all Britons to weep and be sad.

However depressed Chatterton is represented to have been on hearing of the death of Beckford, I am inclined to imagine, that the emoluments he gained by elegies, reconciled him to the loss. From a memorandum of Chatterton, it is to be inferred that he rather rejoiced than mourned over the ashes of Alderman Beckford.

Lost by his death in an essay, £.1 11 6

Gained in elegies £.2 2 0

—— in essays 3 3 0

5 5 0

Am glad he is dead by

£.3 13 6

Chatterton's place of polite resort was the chapter coffee house in Pater-noster-row, here, he acquaints us, he was quite familiar, and intimate with all the geniuses. He was not singular in his predilection for the chapter coffee house. I know a man who is so uniformly to be seen in the chapter coffee room that he is justly considered by the hostess as one of the fixtures!

Early in July, Chatterton left his lodgings at the house of of Mr. Walmsley, the plaisterer in Shoreditch, and went to lodge with Mrs. Angel, a sack-maker in Brook-street, Holborn. It were an injury not to mention historically the lodgings of Chatterton; for every spot he made his residence has become poetical ground.

Chatterton had been nine weeks in the lodgings of Mr. Walmsley. He assigned no reason for quitting the plaisterer's family; and what his reason was, I am far from hoping to discover.

The cause, however, may be conjectured. In his splendid visions of distinction he had already given away the

Trinity House to his relation and inmate Mrs. Ballance; but Mr. Beckford, in whom his hopes of promotion centered, was now dead; the unremitting labours of his pen could scarce avert want, and his pride would have been mortified for those who had heard his boasts of being soon exalted into greatness, to witness him roused from his waking dream by the gripe of distress.

Chatterton now felt the truth of what he had declared in prophetic language, when living with Mr. Lambert, that the Muses were nurses of poverty and insanity.

In one month his literary contributions were so ingenious and ample, that he sustained the reputation and magnitude of five periodical works; the Gospel Magazine, the Town and Country, the Court and City, the London Magazine, and the Political Register.

Yet to so little purpose did he exert his powers of sentiment and composition, that it is very questionable whether those productions which now

fill a large volume, and from which the most rigid critics have not withheld their suffrages; I observe, it is very questionable whether the productions of Chatterton, ample in quantity, and sparkling with wit, ever procured him ten pounds.

Of the works produced by Chatterton in London, no disquisition is to be expected. His miscellanies are to be considered the temporary progeny of indigence, inconvenience and distraction; composed amidst the want of common necessities, in disquietude and dissipation, at the call of booksellers, and on occasional topics. Should there be perceived a disparity between them and the Rowley poetry, the cause is obvious. He lavished all his powers on the counterfeit Rowley, and produced them in a state of comparative leisure and repose.

Of these irregular sallies upon trifling subjects, Bryant affects to have a mean opinion, and with indiscriminate censure, pronounces the whole below mediocrity. But a perusal of Chatterton's

miscellanies teaches us to consider such a critic, a fantastic, pompous declaimer: The Consuliad of Chatterton need not fear competition with the most animated satire of Swift; and the Elegy written at Stanton Drew, discovers a genius speculative and sublime. Where shall we often find poetry that is a stronger representation of visible and audible impressions than the following?

Ye dreary altars by whose side
The druid priest, in crimson dy'd,
The solemn dirges sung,
And drove the golden knife
Into the palpitating seat of life,
When rent with horrid shouts the distant valleys rung!

The bleeding body bends,
The gloomy purple stream ascends,
Whilst the troubled spirit near
Hovers in the steamy air,
Again the sacred dirge they sing,
Again the distant hill and coppice-valley ring.

The African Eclogues are written with little or no attention to the situation of the country; they could not adjust a disputed point of geography like the poetry of Homer. The poet's fancy in the plenitude of wantonness suggests many strange appellations. He introduces a river Togla and Toddeda, and even a Tiber. Nor does he leave his ancient customs behind him, when he crosses the ocean. He makes mention more than once of the sacred oak and mystic trees, as if the rites of the Druids were observed by the swarthy sons of Guinea.

Of the pieces that Chatterton seems to have written, merely if I may so express myself, to put bread in his mouth, the *Revenge*, and the *Woman of Spirit*, two burlettas, have been collected by Mr. Southey and Mr. Cottle in their edition of his works. Both of these slight dramas were performed at Marybone-gardens. The agents of the *Revenge* are gods and goddesses, but in the *Woman of Spirit* we have an antiquarian, who numbers among his

friends Lord Rust and *Horatio Trefoil*. When Chatterton drew his sword against Walpole he threw away the scabbard.

These pieces are very inferior in humour to the *Journal*, which may be considered an antidote against methodism. In the comprehensive circle of his pursuits, he had embraced with ardour the study of surgery and medicine; and acquiring by intuition what others possess by labour, he had made himself familiar with the chirurgical and healing science. No longer infatuated with expectations from the booksellers, he had recourse to himself for the power of improving his condition.

He turned his thoughts to the appointment of surgeon's mate in some vessel that was bound to the Coast of Africa; a situation lucrative, easy and dignified, when compared to that of writing for booksellers.

His projected voyage he announced in an Ode to a Miss Bush:

Now to the regions where the sun
Does his hot course of glory run,
And parches up the ground;
When o'er the burning cleaving plains,
A long eternal dog-star reigns,
And splendor flames around:
There will I go !

This passage of the Ode pleases, because we always listen with eagerness to what a favourite author relates of his own history; but the other stanzas are so monstrously hyperbolical, that they can affect nobody, because nobody will believe them.

Having directed his views towards Africa, he applied to Mr. Barrett, the Bristol surgeon, for a recommendation to the appointment of surgeon's mate in a Guinea ship.

But the breast of the historian of Bristol was not to be melted into compassion, by the representation which Chatterton made him of his forlorn condition. Barrett envied the youth his abilities, was mortified at his lofty

spirit, and affected a detestation of his libertine principles.* He refused him a recommendation and his last hope was blasted.

Indigence now pressed hard upon Chatterton. His situation was calamitous. His load of misery became every day more intolerable, and at last triumphed over his fortitude.

Of his extreme indigence, there is a positive testimony. Mrs. Angel remembers that for two days, when he did not absent himself from his room, he went without food. The breast of this woman was not without feeling. She compassionated the situation of her young lodger, and begged he would take a little dinner with her. But he was offended at the invitation, which seemed to hint he was in want, and assured her he was not hungry.

Mr. Cross, an apothecary in brook-street, bore evidence, that while Chatterton lived with Mrs. Angel, he fre-

* See an insulting note over the ashes of Chatterton, signed Barrett. Works of Chatterton, vol. 3, p. 419.

quently called at the shop, and was repeatedly pressed by Mr. Cross to dine or sup with him, but always in vain. One evening, however, hunger so far prevailed over his pride, as to tempt him to partake of a barrel of oysters, when he was observed to eat most voraciously.

Yet only a short space anterior to this wretched condition, the tenderness of his social affections was very strongly manifested. It is an undisputed fact, that with the hard earnings of his genius, he purchased and sent to his grandmother, his mother and sister at Bristol, a little present of british herb snuff, half a dozen tea-cups and saucers, and a couple of fans.

Pressed hard by indigence and its companions, gloom and despondency, the mind of Chatterton became disordered, and on the night of the 24th of August, 1770, he swallowed a large dose of opium, which caused his death. He was found the next morning a horrid spectacle, with his limbs and features distorted, and several pieces of

opium sticking to his teeth. The floor of his room was covered with little pieces of written paper which he had torn before he took the poison; but there was no appearance of any writings on parchment or vellum.

The coroner was summoned. The witnesses were Frederic Angel, Mary Foster, and William Hamsley. The inquest of the jury was brought in insanity, and the body of Chatterton was put into a shell, and carried unwept, unheeded, and unowned, to the burying-ground of the work-house in Shoe-lane.

He wanted three months of completing his eighteenth year.

Such was the burial of Thomas Chatterton! The youth whose works illuminated by the divine spirit of poetical genius, will perish only with the general destruction of the great globe itself; this dazzling miracle in the history of literature and pattern of social affection, was buried with the burial of an ass drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of the city!

Let us now turn our eyes for a moment towards Bristol, let us go into the house where dwell the grandmother, the mother and sister of Chatterterton. What a scene of affliction! behold they sit broken-hearted! behold the grey hairs of the mother brought in sorrow to the grave by the death of her child—the child of her prayers, that child of filial affection, who denied himself the common necessities of life, to buy and send to his parent some little token of his tender love. Behold this virtuous family, who have long struggled with calamities, and borne all their suffering with meekness, lowliness and patience—behold them at last overcome; behold tears gush from their eyes, and on their eye-lids is the shadow of death.

O God! look upon their afflictions! the child of their prayers—the child in whom all their hopes and expectations centered; that child dead from the poisonous draught administered by his own hands—his body unowned, unpitied, unwept, cast into a shell, and

carried; unattended by mourners, without a pall, without a passing bell, to the burying-ground of a work-house!

Oh! falters the mother, had I been at his bed-side to have watched over my child in his last moments—to have smoothed his pillow—to have offered up my prayers in secret for him to God—it would have been something. But to be told that he was abandoned by mankind—without a helping hand to relieve him—without a human voice to console him—alas! at this, nature, flesh, blood, spirit, heart—all fail!

No sooner was the untimely end of Chatterton announced, than all bedlam or Parnassus rushed out to shew the world how pathetically they could mourn in elegy. But the panegyric they have bestrewed over the youth's grave will never extend his reputation beyond the Alps, because in the manufacturing of their verse they have set all translation at defiance.

Johnson would have informed these drivellers, that where there is leisure

for fiction there can be little grief; and, however the lamentations of Knox, the mourning of Mrs. Robinson, the grief of Mrs. Cowley, the woe of Miss Williams, the distraction of Mr. Hayley and the tenderness of Mr. Coleridge may exact idolatrous reverence from Doctor Gregory, I request my reader to ask his conscious heart, whether passion runs after studied declamation, remote similes, or incongruous images?

It will be no violation of truth to affirm that when Doctor Knox exclaims, *Unfortunate boy! hadst thou been known to the munificent patrons of genius!*—I repeat, when the Doctor modulates his grief in this manner, his lamentations over Chatterton are far inferior to those of Sancho over his dead ass.

I believe that Doctor Knox, however voluminous his writings, was never known to produce a rhyme, if I may so express myself, in his vernacular idiom. He might however have safely contended with Mrs. Robinson for the prize of like endings. Her monody to Chatterton begins thus:

If grief can deprecate the wrath of Heaven
Or human frailty hope to be forgiven!

I fear the wrath of heaven was never deprecated by such poetry as this!

The monody of Mrs. Cowley is, surely not the effusion of grief; its sentiments are artificial. *Si vis me flere*—In vain does that poet strive to impart grief, whose breast does not feel it. Can such images as these call tears from the eye of the reader?

And now Despair her sable form extends,
Creeps to his couch, and o'er his pillow bends.
Ah! see! a deadly bowl the fiend conceal'd
Which to his eye with caution is reveal'd
Seize it Apollo!—seize the liquid snare!
Dash it to earth or dissipate in air!

Such is the tenour of a long poem,
which Doctor Gregory calls beautiful.

But assertion is not proof: and I appeal to the good sense of my reader, whether real grief deals in personification and mythology? This may be poetry at Oxford and Cambridge, but the breast uncorrupted by the dogmatism of learning, finds in it mere (for I too can quote latin) *verba voces et preterea nihil*.

The grief of Miss Williams was confined to fourteen lines: she lamented in a Sonnet. This sonnet has one striking defect. The name of Chatterton is omitted; and "*the mourning of her bleeding heart*" would have no particular application, were the note she has subjoined to be unfortunately expunged. It is a sonnet to be let.

He who is at all conversant with Pope will soon detect the *imitari aveo* of that poet in the chastized rhymes of Mr. Hayley. The death-bed of Chatterton is that of the Duke of Buckingham made over again.

The Monody of Mr. Coleridge is considered by critics not only an effusion of exquisite beauty, but the

greatest production of his muse. I concur most heartily in this sentiment. It breathes all the inspiration of poetry. It begets sympathy. It confers honour. And the poet in raising this monument to the memory of Chatterton, has erected his own,

In the conclusion, however, Mr. Coleridge, counteracts his own pathos. He had in the enthusiasm of a political fancy imagined Happiness to himself as the inhabitant of a particular region; he thought she was to be found either in some forest, or on some river's bank, in the states of America; he contemplated a voyage to her, and hoped by crossing the ocean to leave every care and anxiety, and vexation behind him.

On this expedition after happiness he was to have been accompanied by no less a personage than an epic poet, and a minor in odes. Hence the following passage of his Monody.

O Chatterton! that thou wert yet alive!
Sure thou would'st spread the canvass to the gale,
And love, with us, the tinkling team to drive
O'er peaceful Freedom's undivided dale;
And we at sober eve, would round thee throng,
Hanging enraptur'd on thy stately song!
And greet with smiles the young-eyed Poesy
All deftly mask'd, as hoar Antiquity!

All this is mere sound, signifying nothing. We well know that neither Chatterton nor Mr. Coleridge would have spread the canvass to the gale, nor turned waggoners in America, and driven the tinkling team. Neither is it very likely that Mr. Coleridge, and Mr. Southey, and Mr. Lovel, would have assembled at eve round Chatterton, and hung enraptured on his song. They would, more probably, have damned his song with faint praise, or heard it with sad civility.

Such were the life, death, and requiems over the grave of Thomas Chatterton; a youth, who, had he lived under happier auspices, would pro-

bably have risen to the highest distinction, and at his death, instead of being carried to the burying-ground of a workhouse, been borne in solemn pomp to Westminster Abbey.

He was of a comely person, and distinguished in his earlier years by a pensive gravity of demeanour, which assimilated him more to the man than the boy.

His most remarkable feature was his eye. Catcott says he could never look at it long enough to distinguish what sort of an eye it was; but one could see his soul through it.—Mr. Barrett, the surgeon, says, he took particular notice of Chatterton's eyes, from the nature of his profession. He never saw such. They were grey; yet fire rolled at the bottom of them, as it does in black eyes. Mr. Barrett adds, that he would differ on purpose with Chatterton in opinion, to make him earnest, and to see how wonderfully his eye would strike fire, kindle and blaze up.

His mind was eminently compre-

hensive. His imagination was vigorous, his judgment accurate, and such was the versatility of his powers, that he could either clothe the sublimest conceptions in the language of fire, melt every heart to tenderness by his pathos, or convulse the breast with laughter by his felicity in discovering relations between things, where no relation was suspected to exist.

His industry is without a parallel in the annals of literature. He was a voluntary student, and he left no department of knowledge unexplored. One day, says Mr. Thistlewaite, he might be found busily employed in the study of heraldry and English antiquities; the next discovered him deeply engaged, confounded and perplexed amidst the subtleties of metaphysical disquisition, or lost and bewildered in the abstruse labyrinth of mathematical researches; and these in an instant again neglected and thrown aside, to make room for music and astronomy. Even physic was not without a charm to allure his imagination, and he would

talk of Galen, Hippocrates and Paracelsus, with all the confidence and familiarity of a modern empiric.

We are informed by Mrs. Newton, that she heard him frequently say he found he could write best towards the full of the moon; at which period, as if the immediate presence of that luminary added to the inspiration, he would consecrate the night to the Muses.

He was either sometimes indiscriminate in his censures, or else, in the true spirit of authorship, he could bear, like the Turk, no brother near his throne. Thus in the same poem that consigns to dulness Cook and Boswell, we find him making a desperate pass at the fair fame of Goldsmith.

For this they puff the heavy Goldsmith's line,
And hail his sentiment, though trite, divine !

To answer the call of his *patron*, who probably regarded quantity more than quality in a composition, he would

appropriate to his own use the property of another. In his *Maria Friendless* we trace his steps to the common of Johnson, feeding largely on the flowerets of the abandoned *Mesilla*. But this will be overlooked in a youth who to procure a dinner had first to fill a sheet, when it is remembered that Sterne, enjoying the opulence of a good living, made up his *Works* from Burton; and that Franklin, in the calmness of philosophy, stole his Parable from Taylor, his Air-bath from Aubrey, and his Cure for troubled Waters from venerable Bede.

He seems very early to have entered on the office of *ensor morum*, and he attacks both ministers and writers with equal boldness of reprehension. In his *Whore of Babylon*, a satirical poem, he fulminates his thunder against the pensioned Johnson.

North shackles ev'ry vote in golden chains,
And Johnson in his list of slaves maintains:

Rest, Johnson, hapless spirit, rest and drink,
No more defile thy claret glass with ink,
In quiet sleep repose thy heavy head,
Kenrick disdains to p—s upon the dead;
Administration will defend thy fame,
And pensions add importance to thy name.

He entertained a very high opinion of the human powers. He thought a great genius could effect any thing. Mrs. Newton observes, that if any uncommon character was mentioned in his hearing, he would say that "the person in question merited no praise; but that God had sent his creatures into the world with arms long enough to reach any thing, if they would be at the trouble of extending them."

His breast glowed, even when a child, with a passion for distinction. A manufacturer promised to make Mrs. Chatterton's children a present of some earthen ware. On asking Chatterton what device he would have painted on his—"Paint me," said the child, "an

angel with wings and a trumpet, to trumpet my name over the world."

He was a lover of truth from the earliest dawn of reason, and nothing could move him so much as having his word called in question. At school his master depended on all occasions upon his word; nor was it ever doubted by his friends.

He neglected no hint in conversation or reading that could assist him in the works he projected. The coffee house qualified him for a hunter of oddities, and there are extracts preserved in the last collection of his works which evince that it was his custom to transcribe such passages from Spieght and Chaucer, as would serve to amplify and embellish his own compositions.

When not lighted into animation by talk, there was much of philosophic gravity in his countenance; an expression of deep and collected thought. Yet sometimes he was overheard to mutter his fancies, and sometimes to laugh in solitude.

And now his look was most demurely sad,
And now he laughed aloud, yet none knew why.
The neighbours star'd and sigh'd, yet blest the lad:
Some deem'd him wondrous wise, and some believ'd
him mad

His life was marked with all the attributes of exalted genius. Walpole has not unhappily discriminated his character by representing him as a fierce and untameable spirit, conscious of superior abilities, inattentive to worldly discretion, and scorning to owe subsistence or reputation to any thing but the ebullitions of his own genius.

Warton and Walpole have joined in an outcry against Chatterton as an impostor. But Mr. Croft has very properly answered this termagant chastity. "Suffer me to ask," observes he, "what the prudery of our critics would have said had the song to *Ælla* or the chorus to *Godwyn*, been produced by Mr. Warton's nephew or by a relation of

Mr. Walpole? Should we then have been stunned with repetitions of impostor and forgery? The sins of the forgery and the impostor would then have been boasted by the child's most distant relations, unto the third and fourth generations."

He had made considerable progress in drawing, unaided by any master. His Sundays were generally passed in walking alone in the country round Bristol, and from these excursions he never failed to bring home with him drawings of churches or ruins.

In these walks it may be also presumed that he looked round on Nature with the eye of a poet. In his poem of Clifton the images supplied him by history are strongly associated by the prospect before him.

In one of his fugitive prose pieces, it is supposed he alludes to himself, were he speaks of a young author who has read more than Magliabechi, wrote more love-letters than Ovid, and discovers sentiment in his common conversation.

Notwithstanding the eagerness with which the surgeon and pewterer of Bristol caught at the pseudo-Rowleian poetry, Chatterton, it appears, was paid for them only with three half-pence in hand, and three shillings more in promises. It deserves to be recorded that when he first shewed Catcott the poems, he had the tonsure on his head which designates the boys of Colston's school.

He only once asked the pewterer for money, and he then did it with the irony of an elegant mind.

Mr. G. Catcott to the executors of T. Rowley,

Dr.

To pleasure in reading his historic works,	5	5	0
———— poetic works,	5	5	0

£. 10 10 0

But there is nothing a son of Mam-

mon would not sooner part with than his money; and no drafts of Chatterton will ever be answered but those he drew on posterity.

At Mr. Walmsley's he used frequently to say he had many writings in his possession, which were worth their weight in gold. To this it was observed that they lay in a small compass, for he had not much luggage.

When he talked of writing something which should procure him money to buy clothes; to paper his room, and enable him to send more presents to his sister, mother and grandmother; he was asked why he did not enable himself to do this by disposing of the writings that were worth their weight in gold? To which he contemptuously replied that the poems in question were not made to be bartered away for ignoble coin, and that if the world did not behave well, it should never see a stanza.

It is a matter of astonishment with what felicity he has versified a literal prose translation of the fifth and nine-

teenth ode of the first book of Horace. It was furnished him by Mr. Gardner of Bristol, in Watson's Horace. I doubt whether the versions of Duncombe or Francis, are more elegant or more polished.

Of the whining piety of the methodists he has made many ludicrous exhibitions. In a long recitative poem called the Journal, he has exhibited the cant vulgarity and interestedness of Whitfield, with such powerful humour, that he convulses the breast with laughter.

Again he starts! he beats his breast!
He rolls his eyes, erects his chest;
Hark! hark! the sound begins,
'Tis a bargain and sale for remission of sins.

Say, beloved congregation,
In the hour of tribulation,
Did the power of man affray me?
Say ye wives and say ye daughters
Han't I staunch'd your running waters?
I have labour'd—pay me—pay me!

He was not inattentive to dress. He informs us, when he got to London, that *he employed his money in fitting himself fashionably*. He was right. An author's ideas are the purer for being dressed decently; and a good dress will facilitate his reception with the booksellers more than an epic poem. But Chatterton was cleanly from nature and principle. He did not resemble Johnson and Goldsmith, who never parted with their shirts, till their shirts parted with them.

He appears like Milton to have been incapable of estimating the respective merits of his own productions. He preferred the Battle of Hastings to the Interlude of Ella.

He was not always content with his first thoughts. There are two Elegies extant on his friend Philips. The second is remarkable not only for several additional stanzas, but many verbal alterations. But an author's success is not always proportionate to his labour. Both these elegies are unworthy the muse of Chatterton.

His poetry is sometimes infected by his native place. In the concluding stanza to Philip's elegy, it is not the language of a poet he uses, but the language of a merchant. He acquaints us his thoughts are *neat as exported from the parent brain!*

His taste was somewhat debauched by reading Cowley. In his Love Odes he sometimes tells his mistress, what the credulity of no girl could be reconciled to,

When thou frownest, I must die!

He preferred the extemporaneous sallies of wit, however unchastized by judgment, to productions less vivacious, but laboured with scrupulous accuracy. We may consider it the image of his own mind, when he makes Astrea Brokage say, "I have read every modern play; from the bright sallies of Foote, to the dull dialogue of Cumberland."

He seems never to have forgiving

Walpole, for he not only remembers him in the *Memoirs of a Sad Dog*, but in the *Advertisement of Sir Butterfly Feather*. In speaking of a sword, he remarks that "it was thought by Horatio Otranto, the great antiquary, to be three inches longer than the ever-memorable one of the famous Earl of Salisbury."

I shall now recapitulate in chronological order what I consider the principal eras of Chatterton's life. But I do it with an hesitating hand. For such minute details sink the biographer into a chronologist, and are never made without the fear of abasement and contempt.

Born three months after his father's death	} Novem. 20, 1752

Left the school in Pile-street when he was five	} Novemer, 1757

Went to Colston's charity-school before he was eight	} October, 1760

Left Colston's charity-school, and
 was articled to Mr. Lambert,
 when fourteen years and seven
 months old } .. July 1, 1767

He was almost sixteen at the
 opening of the New Bridge at
 Bristol, and had been at Mr.
 Lambert's one year and three
 months } October 1, 1768

Soon after known to Catcott and
 Barrett } November, 1768

Dismissed from the attorney's
 desk and drudgery } ... April, 1770

Arrived in London indulging gol-
 den dreams } April 25, 1770

Unrewarded for his literary la-
 bours, and pinched by want, he
 applied to Barrett for a recom-
 mendation as surgeon's mate to
 a slave-ship, and was refused .. } August 12, 1770

Without food Aug. 20 & 21, 1770

Rushed before his Maker, aged
 seventeen years and five months } August 22, 1770

I cannot better conclude this Life of Thomas Chatterton than by adopting his character from Doctor Warton.

“All must acknowledge the vigorous prematurity of Chatterton’s understanding. It was not in books only that this boy shewed his amazing intuition and comprehension. He looked on life with the same penetrating and pervading eye. His observation on things was equally quick and extensive. His humour, his knowledge of the world, his attention to character, and his general perception of the modes of life, appear in his numerous satirical pieces both in prose and verse.

“When, after an education in a charity-school, he was dismissed from the attorney’s desk, and came to London, a stripling of seventeen, we are surprised at the rapidity with which he seized all the topics of conversation then in vogue, whether of politics, literature, or fashion. We wonder at the address, the command, the facility, the versatility of mind, the accomoda-

tion of sentiment, with which in a short time he composed a variety of pieces, and on subjects which usually require long observation and experience.

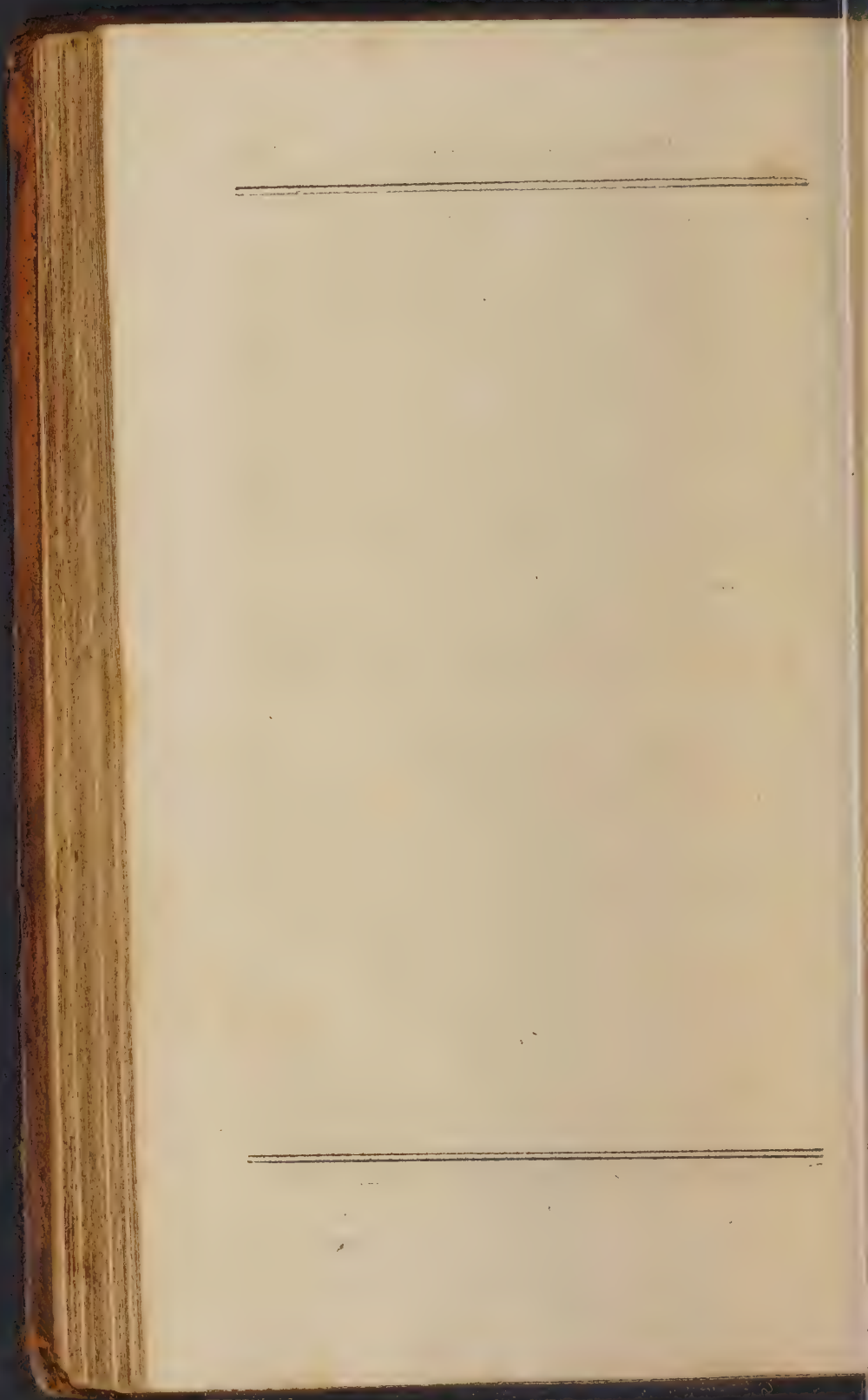
“It is asked, with some degree of plausibility, How could Chatterton, who was educated in a charity-school, where only writing and arithmetic were taught, produce such fine pieces of poetry, which shew marks of more liberal pursuits, and studies of another nature? In the same general way of putting a question, it may be asked, How could that idle and illiterate fellow Shakespear, who was driven out of Warwickshire for deer stealing, write the Tragedy of Othello? I give as general an answer, that the powers of unconquerable mind outgo plans of education and conditions of life. The enthusiasm of intellectual energy surmounts every impediment to a career that is pressing to futurity.

“ *Ergo vivada vis animi pervicit, et extra*

“ *Processit longe flammantia mœnia mundi.*

“It was owing to his pride which has been construed into veracity, that he so inflexibly persisted to the last, that his poems were written by Rowley. To this secret of his bosom he had vowed eternal fidelity, and there is a degree of heroism in his obstinacy. Although in a state of indigence, and a candidate for reputation, no persuasion, no expectation of gain or of praise, no interest could induce him to depart from his original declaration. When he perceived that the poems were treated as forgeries, and that he was traduced as a cheat, the superiority which he had always maintained was affected, and he became still more determined in asserting what he had once asserted. His vanity was piqued in an improper way. He thought it would be more to his disadvantage to own than to suppress the truth: he rather wished to escape the character of falsehood, than to claim the merit of poetry. He had formed golden dreams of the success of this imposture. But finding that his forgeries

were suspected, and that his hopes of profit were at an end, he would not avail himself of that fame which an open confession would have put into his power, and which now only remained to supply the place of solid emolument. Criticism, the companion and the assistant of truth, has endeavoured to replace those laurels, which he tore from his brows with his own hand."



A SPECIMEN
OF
CHATTERTON'S
Correspondence.

LETTER I.

London, April 26, 1770.

Dear Mother,

HERE I am safe and in high spirits—to give you a journal of my tour would not be unnecessary. After riding in the basket to Brislington, I mounted the top of the coach, and rid easy; and agreeably entertained with the conversation of a quaker *in dress*, but little so in personals and behaviour. This laughing friend, who is a carver, lamented his having sent his tools to Worcester, as otherwise he would have accompanied me to London. I left him at Bath; when, finding it rained pretty fast, I entered an inside passenger to Speenhamland, the half-way stage, paying seven shillings. 'Twas lucky I did so, for it snowed all night, and on Marlborough Downs the snow was near a foot high.

At seven in the morning I breakfasted at Speenhamland, and then mounted the coach-box for the remainder of the day, which was a remarkable fine one.—Honest gee-ho complimented me with assuring me that I sat bolder and tighter than any person who ever rid with him.—Dined at Stroud most luxuriantly, with a young gentleman who had slept all the preceding night in the machine; and an old mercantile genius, whose school-boy son had a great deal of wit, as the father thought, in remarking that Windsor was as old as *our saviour's time*.

Got into London about five o'clock in the evening—called upon Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Fell, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Dodsley. Great encouragement from them; all approved of my design;—shall soon be settled.—Call upon Mr. Lambert; shew him this, or tell him, if I deserve a recommendation, he would oblige me to give me one—if I do not, it will be beneath him to take notice of me. Seen all aunts, cousins—all well—and I am welcome. Mr. T. Wensley is alive, and coming home.—Sister, grandmother, &c. &c. &c. remember.—I remain,

Your dutiful son,

T. CHATTERTON.

LETTER II.

Shoreditch, London, May 6, 1770.

Dear Mother,

I am surprised that no letter has been sent in answer to my last, I am settled, and in such a settlement as I would desire. I get four guineas a month by one magazine; shall engage to write a history of England, and other pieces, which will more than double that sum. Occasional essays for the daily papers would more than support me. What a glorious prospect! Mr. Wilkes knew me by my writings since I first corresponded with the booksellers here. I shall visit him next week, and by his interest will insure Mrs. Ballance the Trinity-House. He affirmed that what Mr. Fell had of mine could not be the

writings of a youth; and expressed a desire to know the author. By the means of another bookseller I shall be introduced to Townshend and Sawbridge.

I am quite familiar at the Chapter Coffee-house, and know all the geniuses there. A character is now unnecessary; an author carries his character in his pen. My sister will improve herself in drawing. My grandmother is, I hope, well. Bristol's mercenary walls were never destined to hold me—there, I was out of my element; now, I am in it—London! Good God! how superior is London to that despicable place Bristol!—Here is none of your little meanesses, none of your mercenary securities, which disgrace that miserable hamlet.—Dress, which is in Bristol an eternal fund of scandal, is here only introduced has a subject of praise; if a man dresses well, he has taste; if careless, he has his own reasons for so doing, and is prudent. Need I remind you of the contrast? The poverty of authors is a common observation, but not always a true one. No author can be poor who understands the arts of booksellers—Without this necessary knowledge, the greatest genius may starve; and, with it, the greatest dunce live in splendor. This knowledge I have pretty well dipped into.—The Levant man of war, in which T. Wensley went out, is at Portsmouth; but no news from him yet.—I lodge in one of Mr. Walmsley's best rooms. Let Mr. Cary copy the letters on the other sides and give them to the persons for whom they are designed, if not too much labour for him.

I remain, yours, &c.

T. CHATTERTON.

P S. I have some trifling presents for my mother, sister Thorne, &c.

Sunday morning.

For Mr. T. CARY.

I HAVE sent you a task. I hope no unpleasing one. Tell all your acquaintance for the future to read the Freeholder's Magazine. When you have any thing for publication, send it to me, and it shall most certainly appear in some periodical compilation. Your last piece was, by the ignorance of a corrector, jumbled under the considerations in the acknowledgements. But I rescued it, and insisted on its appearance.

Your friend,

T. C.

Direct for me, to be left at the Chapter Coffee-house, Paternoster-row.

Mr. HENRY KATOR.

IF you have not forgot Lady Betty, any Complaint, Rebus, or Enigma, on the dear charmer, directed for me, to be left at the Chapter Coffee-house, Paternoster-row—shall find a place in some magazine, or other as I am engaged in many.

Your friend,

T. CHATTERTON.

Mr. WILLIAM SMITH.

WHEN you have any poetry for publication, send it to me, to be left at the Chapter Coffee-house, Paternoster-row, and it shall most certainly appear.

Your friend,

T. C.

Mrs. BAKER.

THE sooner I see you the better—send me as soon as possible Rymsdyck's address.

(Mr. Cary will leave this at Mr. Flower's, Small-street.)

Mr. MASON.

GIVE me a short prose description of the situation of Nash—and the poetic edition shall appear in some magazine. Send me also whatever you would have published, and direct for me, to be left at the Chapter Coffee-house, Paternoster-row.

Your friend,

T. CHATTERTON.

Mr. MAT. MEASE.

BEGGING Mr. Mease's pardon for making public use of his name lately—I hope he will remember me, and tell all his acquaintance to read the Freeholder's Magazine for the future.

T. CHATTERTON.

Tell—Mr. Thaire, Mr. Rudhall, Mr. Ward, Mr. Gaster, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Kalo, Mr. A. Broughton, Mr. Carty, Mr. Smith, Mr. J. Broughton, Mr. Hanmor, Mr. Williams, Mr. Vaughan, &c. &c.

to read the Freeholder's Magazine.

LETTER III.

King's Bench, for the present, May 14, 1770.

Dear Madam,

DON'T be surprized at the name of the place. I am not here as a prisoner, Matters go on swimmingly; Mr. Fell having offended certain persons,

they have set his creditors upon him, and he is safe in the King's Bench. I have been bettered by this accident: His successors in the Freeholder's Magazine, knowing nothing of the matter, will be glad to engage me on my own terms. Mr. Edmunds has been tried before the House of Lords, sentenced to pay a fine, and thrown into Newgate. His misfortunes will be to me of no little service. Last week, being in the pit of Drury Lane, Theatre, I contracted an immediate acquaintance (which you know is no hard task to me) with a young gentleman in Cheapside; partner in a music shop, the greatest in the city. Hearing I could write, he desired me to write a few songs for him: this I did the same night, and conveyed them to him the next morning. These he shewed to a doctor in music, and I am invited to treat with this doctor, on the footing of a composer, for Ranelagh and the Gardens. *Bravo, hey boys, up we go!*—Besides the advantage of visiting these expensive and polite places gratis; my vanity will be fed with the sight of my name in a copper-plate, and my sister will receive a bundle of printed songs, the words by her brother. These are not all my acquisitions: a gentleman who knows me at the Chapter, as an author, would have introduced me as a companion to the young Duke of Northumberland, in his intended general tour. But, alas! I speak no tongue but my own!—But to return once more to a place I am sickened to write of, Bristol. Though, as an apprentice, none had greater liberties, yet the thoughts of servitude killed me: now I have that for my labour, I always reckoned the first of my pleasures, and have still, my liberty. As to the clearance I am ever ready to give it; but really I understand so little of the law, that I believe Mr. Lambert must draw it. Mrs. L. brought what you mention. Mrs. Hughes is as well as age will permit her to be, and my cousin does very well.

I will get some pattern's worth your acceptance; and wish you and my sister would improve yourselves in drawing, as it is here a valuable and never-failing acquisition.—My box shall be attended to; I hope my books are in it—if not, send them; and particularly Catcott's Hutchinsonian jargon on the deluge, and the M.S. glossary, composed of one small book, annexed to a larger.—My sister will remember me to Miss Sanford. I have not quite forgot her; though there are so many pretty milliners, &c. that I have almost forgot myself.—Carty will think on me; upon inquiry, I find his trade dwindled into nothing here. A man may very nobly starve by it: but he must have luck indeed, who can live by it.—Miss Rumsey, if she comes to London, would do well, as an old acquaintance, to send me her address.—London is not Bristol—We may patrol the town for a day, without raising one whisper, or nod of scandal.—If she refuses, the curse of all antiquated virgins light on her: may she be refused, when she shall request! Miss Rumsey will tell Miss Baker, and Miss Baker will tell Miss Porter, that Miss Porter's favoured humble servant, though but a *young* man, is a very old lover; and in the eight-and-fiftieth year of his age: but that, as Lappet says, is the flower of a man's days; and when a lady can't get a young husband, she must put up with an old bedfellow. I left Miss Singer, I am sorry to say it, in a very bad way; that is in a way to be married.—But mum—Ask Miss Suky Webb the rest; if she nows she'll tell ye.—I beg her pardon for revealing the secret; but when the knot is fastened, she shall know how I came by it.—Miss Thatcher may depend upon it, that, if I am not in love with her, I am in love with nobody else: I hope she is well; and if that whining, sighing, dying pulpit-fop, Lewis, has not finished his languishing lectures, I hope she will see her amoroso next Sunday.—If Miss Love has no objection to hav-

ing a crambo song on her name published, it shall be done.—Begging pardon of Miss Cotton for whatever has happened to offend her, I can assure her it has happened without my consent. I did not give her this assurance when in Bristol, lest it should seem like an attempt to avoid the anger of her *furious* brother. Inquire, when you can, how Miss Broughton received her billet. Let my sister send me a journal of all the transactions of the females within the circle of your acquaintance. Let Miss Watkins know, that the letter she made herself ridiculous by, was never intended for her; but another young lady in the neighbourhood, of the same name. I promised before my departure to write to some hundreds, I believe; but, what with writing for publications, and going to places of public diversion, which is as absolutely necessary to me as food, I find but little time to write to you. As to Mr. Barrett, Mr. Catcott, Mr. Burgum, &c. &c. they rate literary lumber so low, that I believe an author, in their estimation, must be poor indeed! But here matters are otherwise; had Rowley been a Londoner, instead of a Bristowyan, I could have lived by copying his works.—In my humble opinion, I am under very few obligations to any persons in Bristol: one, indeed, has obliged me; but, as most do, in a manner which makes his obligation no obligation.—My youthful acquaintances will not take it in dudgeon, that I do not write oftener to them, than I believe I shall: but, as I had the happy art of pleasing in conversation, my company was often liked, where I did not like: and to continue a correspondence under such circumstances, would be ridiculous. Let my sister improve in copying music, drawing, and every thing which requires genius: in Bristol's mercantile style those things may be useless, if not a detriment to her; but here they are highly profitable.—Inform Mr. Rhise that nothing shall be wanting, on my part, in the business he was so kind as to employ me

in; should be glad of a line from him, to know whether he would engage in the marine department; or spend the rest of his days, safe, on dry ground.—Intended waiting on the Duke of Bedford relative to the Trinity-House; but his Grace is dangerously ill. My grandmother, I hope, enjoys the state of health I left her in. I am Miss Webb's humble servant. Thorne shall not be forgot, when I remit the small trifles to you. Notwithstanding Mrs. B's not being able to inform me of Mr. Garsed's address, through the closeness of the pious Mr. Ewer, I luckily stumbled upon it this morning.

I remain, &c. &c. &c. &c.

Monday Evening. THOMAS CHATTERTON.

(Direct for me, at Mr. Walmsley's, at Shoreditch—only.)

LETTER IV.

Tom's Coffee-house, London, May 30, 1770.

Dear Sister,

THERE is such a noise of business and politics in the room, that my inaccuracy in writing here, is highly excusable. My present profession obliges me to frequent places of the best resort. To begin with, what every female conversation begins with, dress: I employ my money now in fitting myself fashionably, and getting into good company; this last article always brings me in interest. But I have engaged to live with a gentleman, the brother of a Lord (a Scotch one indeed,) who is going to advance pretty deeply into the bookselling branches: I shall have lodging and boarding, genteel and elegant, gratis: this article,

in the quarter of the town he lives, with worse accommodations, would be 50l. per annum. I shall have, likewise, no inconsiderable premium; and assure yourself every month shall end to your advantage: I will send you two silks this summer; and expect, in answer to this what colours, you prefer. My mother shall not be forgotten. My employment will be writing a voluminous history of London, to appear in numbers the beginning of the next winter. As this will not, like writing political essays, oblige me to go to the coffee-house, I shall be able to serve you the more by it: but it will necessitate me to go to Oxford, Cambridge, Lincoln, Coventry, and every collegiate church near; not at all disagreeable journeys, and not to me expensive. The manuscript glossary, I mentioned in my last, must not be omitted. If money flowed as fast upon me as honours, I would give you a portion of 5000l. You have, doubtless, heard of the Lord Mayor's remonstrating and addressing the King: but it will be a piece of news, to inform you that I have been with the Lord Mayor on the occasion. Having addressed an essay to his Lordship, it was very well received; perhaps better than it deserved; and I waited on his Lordship, to have his approbation, to address a second letter to him, on the subject of the Remonstrance, and its reception. His Lordship received me as politely as a citizen could; and warmly invited me to call on him again. The rest is a secret—But the devil of the matter is, there's no money to be got of this side the question. Interest is of the other side. But he is a poor author, who cannot write on both sides. I believe I may be introduced (and if I am not, I'll introduce myself) to a ruling power in the court party. I might have a recommendation to Sir George Colebrook, an East-India Director, as qualified for an office no ways despicable; but I shall not take a step to the sea, whilst I can continue on land. I went yesterday to Wool-

which, to see Mr. Wensley; he is paid to-day. The artillery is no unpleasing sight, if we bar reflection, and do not consider how much mischief it may do. Greenwich Hospital and St. Paul's Cathedral are the only structures which could reconcile me to any thing out of the Gothic. Mr. Carty will hear from me soon: multiplicity of literary business must be my excuse.— I condole with him, and my dear Miss Sanford, in the misfortune of Mrs. Carty; my physical advice is, to leech her temples plentifully: keep her very low in diet; as much in the dark as possible. Nor is this last prescription the whim of an old woman: whatever hurts the eyes, affects the brain: and the particles of light, when the sun is in the summer signs, are highly prejudicial to the eyes; and it is from this sympathetic effect, that the head-ach is general in summer. But, above all, talk to her but little, and never contradict her in any thing. This may be of service. I hope it will. Did a paragraph appear in your paper of Saturday last, mentioning the inhabitants of London's having opened another view of St. Paul's; and advising the corporation, or vestry of Redclift, to procure a more compleat view of Redclift church? My compliments to Miss Thatcher: if I am in love, I am; though the devil take me, if I can tell with whom it is. I believe I may address her in the words of Scripture, which no doubt she reveres; "If you had not ploughed with my heifer" (or bullock rather,) "you had not found out my riddle." Humbly thanking Miss Rumsey for her complimentary expression I cannot think it satisfactory. Does she, or does she not, intend coming to London? Mrs. O'Coffin has not yet got a place; but there is not the least doubt but she will in a little time.

Essay-writing has this advantage, you are sure of constant pay; and when you have once wrote a piece which makes the author inquired after, you may bring the booksellers to your own terms. Essays on

the patriotic side fetch no more than what the copy is sold for. As the patriots themselves are searching for a place, they have no gratuities to spare. So says one of the beggars, in a temporary alteration of mine, in the Jovial Crew :

A patriot was my occupation,
It got me a name but no pelf:
Till, starv'd for the good of the nation,
I begg'd for the good of myself
Fal, lal, &c.

I told them if 'twas not for me,
Their freedoms would all go to pot;
I promis'd to set them all free,
But never a farthing I got.
Fal, lal, &c.

—On the other hand, unpopular essays will not even be accepted; and you must pay to have them printed: but then you seldom lose by it. Courtiers are so sensible of their deficiency in merit, that they generally reward all who know how to daub them with an appearance of it. To return to private affairs — Friend Slude may depend upon my endeavouring to find the publications you mention. They publish the Gospel Magazine here. For a whim, I write in it. I believe they are not any sent to Bristol; they are hardly worth the carriage—methodistical, and unmeaning. With the usual ceremonies to my mother, and grandmother; and sincerely, without ceremony, wishing them both happy; when it is in my power to make them so, they shall be so; and with my kind remembrance to Miss Webb, and Miss Thorne; I remain, as I ever was,

Yours, &c. to the end of the chapter,

THOMAS CHATTERTON.

P. S. I am this minute pierced through the heart by the black eye of a young lady, driving along in a hackney-coach;—I am quite in love: if my love lasts till that time, you shall hear of it in my next.

LETTER V.

June 19th, 1770.

Dear Sister,

I HAVE an horrid cold—The relation of the manner of my catching it may give you more pleasure than the circumstance itself. As I wrote very late Sunday night (or rather very early Monday morning), I thought to have gone to bed pretty soon last night: when, being half undressed, I heard a very doleful voice, singing Miss Hill's favorite bedlamite song. The hum-drum of the voice so struck me, that though I was obliged to listen a long while before I could hear the words, I found the similitude in the sound. After hearing her with pleasure drawl for above half an hour, she jumped into a brisker tune, and hobbled out the ever-famous song, in which poor Jack Fowler was to have been satirized.—“ I put my hand into a
“ bush: I prick'd my finger to the bone: I saw a
“ ship sailing along: I thought the sweetest flowers
“ to find:” and other pretty flowery expressions, were twanged with no inharmonious bray.—I now ran to the window, and threw up the sash; resolved to be satisfied, whether or no it was the identical Miss Hill, *in propria persona*.—But, alas! it was a person whose twang is very well known, when she is awake, but who had drank so much royal bob (the gingerbread-baker for that, you know), that she was

now singing herself asleep. This somnifying liquor had made her voice so like the sweet echo of Miss Hill's, that if I had not considered that she could not see her way up to London, I should absolutely have imagined it hers—There was a fellow and a girl in one corner, more busy in attending to their own affairs, than the melody.

This part of the letter, for some lines, is not legible.

***** the morning) from Marybone gardens; I saw the fellow in the cage at the watch-house, in the parish of St. Giles; and the nymph is an inhabitant of one of Cupid's inns of court.—There was one similitude it would be injustice to let slip. A drunken fishman, who sells souse mackarel, and other delicious dainties, to the eternal detriment of all two-penny ordinaries; as his best commodity, his salmon, goes off at three halfpence the piece: this itinerant merchant, this moveable fish-stall, having likewise had his dose of bob-royal! stood still for a while; and then joined chorus, in a tone which would have laid half a dozen lawyers, pleading for their fees, fast asleep: this naturally reminded me of Mr. Haythorne's song of

“ Says Plato, who oy oy oy should man be vain?”

However, my entertainment, though sweet enough in itself has a dish of sour sauce served up in it; for I have a most horrible wheezing in the throat: but I don't repent that I have this cold; for there are so many nostrums here, that 'tis worth a man's while to get a distemper, he can be cured so cheap.

June 29, 1770.

My cold is over and gone. If the above did not recal to your mind some scenes of laughter, you have lost your ideas of risibility

LETTER VI.

Dear Mother,

I SEND you in the box—six cups and saucers with two basons, for my sister—If a china tea pot and cream pot, is in your opinion, necessary, I will send them, but I am informed they are unfashionable, and that the red china, which you are provided with, is more in use—a cargo of patterns, for yourself, with a snuff box, right French and very curious in my opinion.

Two fans—the silver one, is more graver than the other, which would suit my sister best—But that I leave to you both.

Some British herb snuff, in the box; be careful how you open it—(This I omit lest it injure the other matters)

Some British herb tobacco for my grandmother, some trifles for Thorne. Be assured whenever I have the power, my will won't be wanting to testify, that I remember you—

Yours,

July 8, 1770.

T. CHATTERTON.

N. B.—I shall forestal your intended journey, and pop down upon you at Christmas—

I could have wished, you had sent my red pocket book, as 'tis very material.

I bought two very curious twisted pipes for my grandmother; but both breaking; I was afraid to buy

others lest they should break in the box; and being loose, injure the china. Have you heard any thing further of the clearance——

Direct for me at Mrs. Angel's, Sack-maker, Brooke Street, Holborn.

“ MRS. CHATTERTON.”

LETTER VII.

Dear sister,

I HAVE sent you some china and a fan. You have your choice of two. I am surprised that you chose purple and gold. I went into the shop to buy it: but it is the most disagreeable colour I ever saw—dead, lifeless, and inelegant. Purple and pink, or lemon and pink, are more genteel and lively. Your answer in this affair will oblige me. Be assured, that I shall ever make your wants, my wants; and stretch to the utmost to serve you. Remember me to Miss Sandford, Miss Rumsey, Miss Singer, &c. &c. &c.

As to the songs, I have waited this week for them, and have not had time to copy one perfectly: when the season's over, you will have 'em all in print. I had pieces last month in the following Magazines:

Gospel Magazine,

Town and Country, viz.

Maria Friendless.

False step.

Hunter of Oddities,

To Miss Bush, &c.

Court and City. London. Political Register,
&c. &c.

The Christian Magazine, as they are not to be had perfect, are not worth buying—I remain,

Yours,

July 11, 1770.

T. CHATTERTON.

LETTER VIII.

I AM NOW about an oratorio, which when finished, will purchase you a gown. You may be certain of seeing me before the 1st of January, 1771.—The clearance is immaterial.—My mother may expect more patterns.—Almost all the next Town and Country Magazine is mine. I have an universal acquaintance:—my company is courted every where; and, could I humble myself to go into a compter, could have had twenty places before now:—but I must be among the great; state matters suit me better than commercial. The ladies are not out of my acquaintance. I have a deal of business now, and must therefore bid you adieu. You will have a longer letter from me soon—and more to the purpose.

Yours,

July 20th 1770.

T. C.

Finis.

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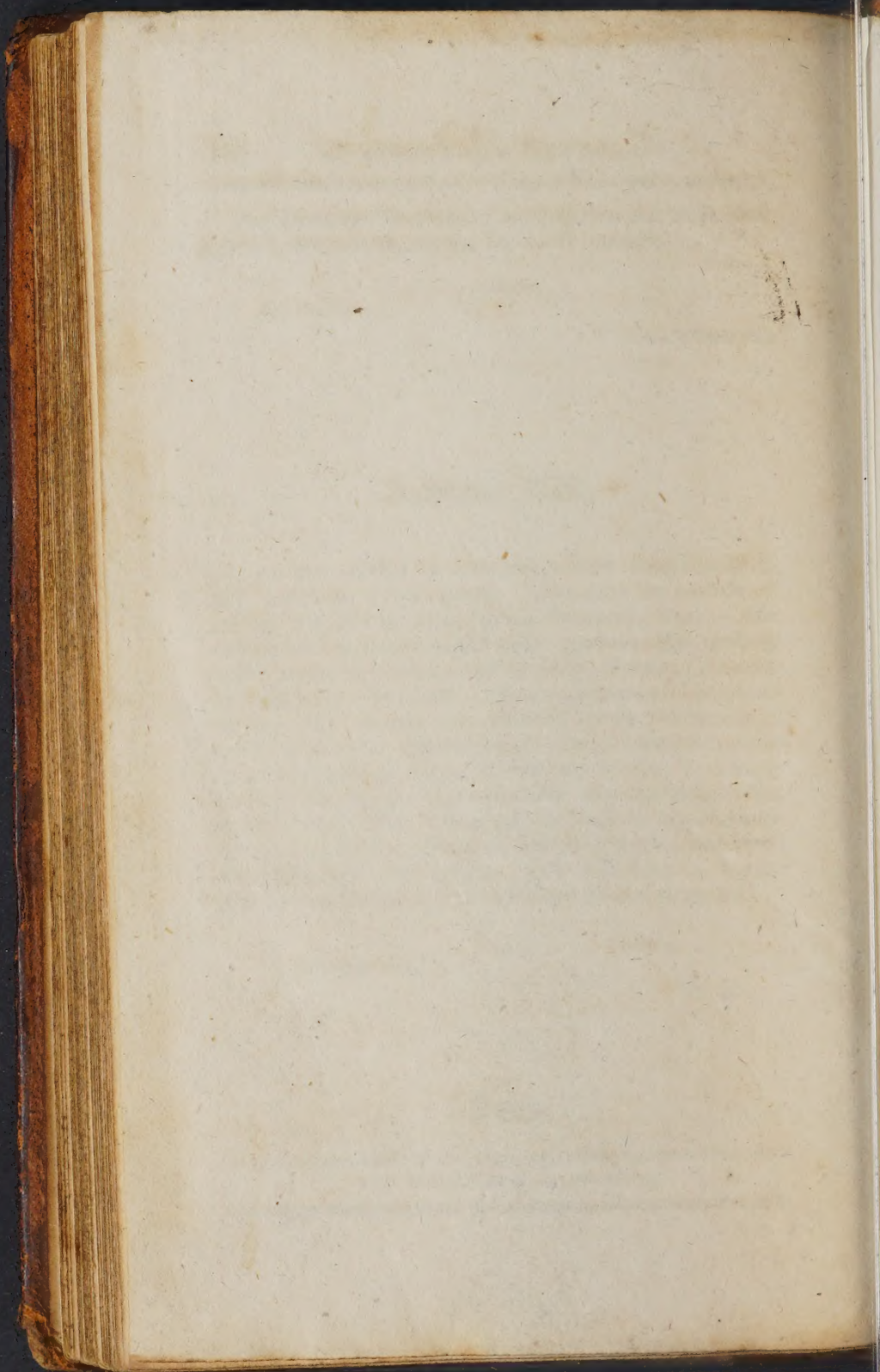
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